

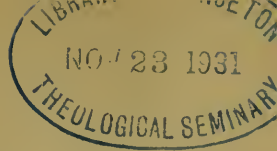


Division BS2665

Section B461



AN EXPOSITION
OF
ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.



AN EXPOSITION

OF

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE Exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, of which I here present a translation to the English reader, was not originally intended for publication. The author, after having resided many years in England, actively engaged in mercantile business, but unremittingly devoting a considerable portion of his time to literary and scientific pursuits, and more particularly to the study of religious and philosophical subjects, retired about the year 1828 to Heidelberg, for the purpose of personally superintending the studies of his son, who was preparing for Holy Orders at the University of that place. Although there were certainly at that time amongst the leading professors of Divinity in Germany, many men of most acute understanding, extraordinary scientific acquirements and moral worth, he found but few whose views agreed to any considerable extent with those at which he had arrived, and whose labours in their immediate province were not,

in his opinion, more or less under the influence of the different philosophical systems at that time engrossing all minds, which, although they may be reckoned amongst the proudest triumphs of the human understanding, leave the heart cold, because they do not lead to the acknowledgment of the Redeemer as the sole Fountain of grace and happiness.

Endowed to an unusual extent with intellectual powers and talents, which he had cultivated with a most unremitting perseverance and considerable success, and certainly not disposed to undervalue the influence of the sciences upon the development of the human race, our author had during a life of very severe trials and mental struggles, arrived at the most positive conviction, that a lasting tranquillity of mind can be attained solely by the consciousness of a God of Love as the central point of all spiritual life, and that this consciousness can gain life within us only by the continued study of the Holy Scriptures and a life of active obedience to their dictates. With these convictions, it was natural that he should value all scientific pursuits and especially all philosophical and theological studies in so far only as he found them lead, in subservience to the one great end, to a more perfect knowledge of God as He is shown to us in the sublime simplicity of the Gospel. Having, however, from

his own experience, become deeply sensible of the fact that the understanding is not to be laid under interdict, and that, therefore, no truth can attain to real life within us, and consequently secure a lasting peace of mind, at least in the case of a considerable class of men, unless it harmonize with the uncompromising demands of the understanding so far as it is developed in the individual, and that its development must go hand in hand with purification of the heart, in order to lead to the results at which, whether consciously or unconsciously we all aim, he could not but urge his son to the earnest study of all that might contribute towards reaching so desired an end. At the same time, however, he considered it his sacred duty to give him the benefit of his own experience, and to guard him, as much as in him lay, against the errors into which he himself had fallen, and the severe struggles to which they had led him, by pointing out to him the proper limits of reason in our present condition, and by teaching him in all his studies to keep steadfastly in view the Centre of all light and Fountain of all truth.

Of all the Epistles of the New Testament, that of St. Paul to the Romans appeared to him to claim the greatest attention, as embodying the doctrine of Christianity in a more systematic form than any other; and he had

for many years made it the chief object of his studies. He therefore began to read this Epistle with his son, who soon took so lively an interest in his views, that his expositions of the more difficult or intricate parts were gradually so much extended that he was induced to write them down very nearly in the form in which they now appear. The manuscript was communicated to several of his more intimate friends, and amongst them to several clergymen, who, struck by the singular earnestness and depth of the work, persuaded him to lay it before the public. He consented without much hesitation, prompted by the earnest desire of communicating to others what had proved itself to him as truth by its effects in elevating his ideas of God, and establishing his peace of mind on a lasting basis. He judged it necessary, however, to prefix an introduction, in order to explain the grounds upon which he proceeded. This introduction has been pronounced a masterpiece by many men of great intellectual powers, even amongst such as have not agreed on all points with the author's views. And indeed he never had any reason to regret the publication of his work. It has proved a source of great consolation to many who have tested the truth of the views which it propounds, by applying them to the varying fortunes of their own lives. And

of all the reviews and literary notices which the work has called forth, there is not one that does not bear a willing testimony to the Christian earnestness of the author, and the interest inspired by his book.

When an author appears before the public with the results of his researches on purely scientific subjects, we care little for the history of his private life. His communications are addressed exclusively to the understanding, and must speak for themselves; he either establishes his propositions, or he fails to do so, and it is of little importance to us how or whence he may have gained his knowledge. It is not so in the case of communications on subjects of a higher order, which relate to the vital interests of mankind, and in which the heart and the will are no less concerned than the understanding. When such are before us, it is natural that we should desire to have a more intimate knowledge of the man, to ascertain by what tests he has been able to prove the truth of his convictions, and how he arrived at them. It was my original intention to create an interest for the author beforehand, and thus increase that which his work appears to me likely of itself to inspire, by extracting largely from two volumes which have been edited by his son for private circulation among his friends, containing a brief

memoir of his life, together with a copious selection from his very interesting correspondence, both on private matters and subjects of general interest. On making the attempt, however, I found that I could not attain my object without far exceeding the limits usually allowed to a preface. I have thought it best, therefore, to confine myself to a brief statement of the more prominent facts in his life.

William Benecke was born at Hanover, of parents in easy circumstances, and received the rudiments of a classical education preparatory to his proceeding to a University as a student in Theology. But the premature death of an elder brother, who had fallen a sacrifice to an immoderate application to study at Göttingen, induced his parents, who had noticed similar predilections in their younger son, to change their plans in respect to him. He was, in his fourteenth year, bound apprentice to a so-called merchant at a small town not far from his home, with the strictest injunctions that he should be debarred from all opportunities for indulging his favourite pursuits. His intense eagerness for knowledge, however, soon found means to overcome all obstacles put in his way; and we find him during the whole of his stay at Luneburg engaged at four o'clock in the morning, wrapped in his cloak, without fire and with but

a scanty supply of even the most common books of reference, in applying himself to the study of Mathematics, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy and Languages, studies which he prosecuted with the greatest assiduity for many years, and with so much success, in some departments at least, that a well-known and highly esteemed English astronomer once told him that he considered him fully prepared to fill the chair of any mathematical professorship. With this zeal for scientific pursuits, he combined great talent and love for Music, in which he had attained considerable proficiency at an early age; and a touching passage in his after-life records, that he soothed the last hours of a beloved wife by his solemn and heartfelt playing on the piano-forte. — A letter written in his seventeenth year, which is still extant, gives ample proof of the earnestness of his aims at that time. In this letter he informs his father that, although he does not by any means wish to oppose his views, he feels confident that in his present position he has no chance of acquiring the knowledge which he considers necessary for one who would adorn his profession, and concludes with a list of preparatory studies, containing amongst many other things some half-dozen modern languages. In consequence of this letter, he was recalled from what he termed his exile; and, his father dying

soon after, he left Hanover, and meeting with a Jewish banker and army contractor, whom his manners and conversation inspired with confidence, he found himself in his nineteenth year occupying a situation of great responsibility, such as is generally entrusted only to men of maturer years and after much deliberation. In his twenty-first year he went to Hamburgh, where he established himself as a merchant; but he was unfortunate in the choice of a partner who deceived him by false representations, soon lost the whole of his paternal inheritance, and after several unsuccessful attempts to retrieve his fortunes, during which time he found himself with his amiable young wife and an increasing family exposed more than once to absolute want, he entered the house of the banker Mendelssohn, to take a part in the management of his extensive correspondence in four or five different languages. This Mendelssohn, a son of the philosopher and himself a man of great acquirements, soon found him too good for his post, and advised him to apply himself to the study of maritime law, and more particularly the laws and usages regulating marine insurances, a subject at that time very inadequately understood. He entered into this idea with much spirit, and was the first to reduce that intricate subject to a science. He published the result of his researches, and the

theory which he grounded upon it, in a work of five volumes, for which he obtained twelve hundred subscribers before the first sheet was printed, and which has since been translated into three or four languages. The reputation which his work procured him, was the means of his introduction to many of the first merchants at Hamburgh, and enabled him to form amongst them a company for the insurance of lives, the first ever attempted on the Continent. Having become the actuary of this company, with a salary and a share of the profits, and deriving at the same time considerable sums from the sale of his work on Insurance, he now believed himself secure from all further want, and led a most happy life, again devoting a great portion of his leisure to the pursuit of his studies, which at this time embraced the works of the great German philosophers. He had, however, over-rated his strength, and before the completion of his work he fell into a dangerous illness, which had nearly put a period to his existence. He had hardly recovered, when he was unexpectedly plunged into the deepest affliction by the death of a lovely child, and the wife who has been before alluded to. It was during this time that he first found, that neither the very imperfect religious instruction which he had received during his early youth, nor the

philosophical systems which had subsequently inspired him with so much interest, could stand him in the least stead in his present affliction. He saw the whole of his earthly happiness destroyed; he knew of no transgressions which appeared to justify such severe inflictions, and tried in vain to reconcile them with his idea of a God of Love. He was soon, however, and in a most unexpected manner, to be convinced that the God of Love had not lost sight of him. At this very time he became, by what the world calls chance, acquainted with a man who was destined to exercise the greatest influence on his religious development. This man, himself a merchant, but of an apostolic appearance and bearing, tried and matured by the vicissitudes of a very chequered life, succeeded in leading him to the fountain of all solace; shewed him the Redeemer and His work in a light altogether new to him, and brought him to look upon this life as a short period placed between a former and a future existence. The idea of a Pre-existence was not, indeed, new to him, but he had considered it as a mere intellectual speculation, and it had never warmed his heart; thus brought into connection with the workings of an all-loving God, who by an immeasurable sacrifice of His own blissful existence, guides the spirits fallen through their own transgressions, through a

series of different existences to perfection and happiness, this doctrine at once furnished him with a key for the solution of all his religious and philosophical doubts, and poured a happiness into his heart, which none of the many trials, still in store for him, were ever able to shake. Thenceforward he sought for comfort nowhere but in the Gospel. His heart was filled with the love of the Redeemer and of his fellow-creatures (the one, indeed, being unable to exist without the other); and it became his greatest delight to communicate to others the blessings which had been vouchsafed to himself. He never, however, became a mere proselyte-maker, well knowing that the heart of man must needs be prepared by God Himself, in order to receive divine influences.

The author's subsequent fortunes must be briefly summed up. The occupation of Hamburgh by the French destroyed the company of which he had been the founder; and having himself taken a very active part in the war which led to the liberation from their yoke, he was compelled, on the very day of their second entrance into Hamburgh, to seek safety by a precipitate flight to England. Having, by the seizure of the bullion in the Bank, again lost all that he had been able to accumulate, he arrived in London almost penniless, but soon found friends willing to assist him; and having been

introduced by them into some wealthy families, he was enabled to turn his knowledge to account, by giving lessons, chiefly in Mathematics, and thus found his immediate wants supplied. He then became acquainted with the author of a certain chemical invention, and established jointly with him a manufactory, which he carried on with very varying success and under numerous difficulties for many years, until he ultimately secured a moderate competency, upon which, as I have before stated, he retired to Heidelberg, in order to superintend the studies of his younger son, and to devote the remainder of his days to his favourite study and employment. He was kindly received by many of the leading members of the University, and led a happy life, cheered by the society of his second wife, a lady of most cultivated mind, whom he had married a few years after his settlement in England, and who had always, to his great delight, taken a lively interest in his pursuits. After the publication of his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, he devoted all his time and powers to a philosophical work, in which it was his intention to show that all real Philosophy must end in Christianity; and to trace the connection between the Gospel and all that is of divine origin, in the various philosophical systems, which have successively claimed and

engrossed the interests of the more intellectual portion of mankind. This work was unfortunately interrupted by his death. All that could be collected from his detached manuscripts, has been published by his son as a fragment, but no part of it is complete with the exception of an elaborate and very interesting introduction.

It is to be feared that the opinion is but too prevalent, that private research in religious matters is dangerous; that, in fact, theological subjects should be treated only by divines. To this it might be a sufficient answer, that a man may be a divine in the best sense of the word, without being the appointed minister of any particular Church. But it may be well to remark, that such private research is enjoined as a duty by the most enlightened of the clergy themselves. In ancient times, we have the authority of St. Paul himself on this head, who praises the "nobleness" of the Bereans, for "searching whether those things were so," as he had preached. It is true, that in proportion as priestcraft grew, more jealousy was felt of the exercise of private judgment by the laity. But who can say that such times were the most favourable to spiritual enlightenment? In more recent times, the clergy of the reformed Churches have found their greatest strength in the spread of an inquiring spirit among the people. It

would be easy to collect the expressed opinions of many of them, in this sense. One from Archbishop Leighton may suffice here. "Do not," he says, "yourselves so much injury as to bar yourselves from sharing, in your measure, the search of these same things, that were the study of the prophets, and which, by their study and publishing them are made the more accessible to us. Consider that they do concern us universally, if we would be saved." Indeed, to the thoughtful mind it must be obvious, that it can only be in an imperfect state of the Church that an exclusive order of priesthood is necessary. In its perfection all would be "kings and priests" before God, (Rev. i. 6,) "a royal priesthood." (1 Pet. ii. 9.) There is doubtless a deep significance in the words of St. John in describing the New Jerusalem, "I saw no temple therein." God Himself is the Temple of the perfected spirits, and the nearer each individual approaches to the state of a ministering spirit to that Temple, the more effectually does he hasten the coming of the perfection of the Church, and the Redeemer's kingdom.

In conclusion I must be permitted to say a few words respecting the translation. It was made under considerable disadvantages and discouragements. I was chiefly induced to undertake it from the new interest in the writings of

St. Paul, which has of late been aroused by the appearance of various works relative to that Apostle, some of which were reviewed in a very interesting article in the *Edinburgh Review*. (Oct., 1852.) Being myself actively engaged in business, I intended at first to translate but a single chapter of the book, in order to ascertain whether it might, without much difficulty, be brought into language likely to suit the English reader, and then to entrust the translation to other and more practised hands. I soon found, however, that an intimate knowledge of the author's system, as well as of his peculiar method of reasoning, would be absolutely necessary for the purpose, and that the work could only be accomplished as a work of love. I, therefore, undertook it myself, and devoted to it, with increasing interest, the leisure of my last winter evenings. I confess that I have found the task more difficult than I had anticipated; and although I feel much indebted to the valuable assistance of a friend, a clergyman of the Church of England, I have not, on account of his great distance from London, been able to avail myself so much of it as I could have wished, or would have been profitable to my undertaking; and I have several times, during my progress, been tempted to relinquish it in despair of being able to do justice to the original, which is written in most

beautiful language, although in some parts difficult to understand, on account of many more or less obvious allusions to the German philosophical systems. My motive has been throughout, the same which actuated the author in first publishing his work; and I can say with truth, that if but one individual should derive that comfort from this translation, which so many have derived from the original, and myself among the number, who have always considered it one of the greatest blessings of my life to have been intimately connected with the author from my earliest years, I shall consider my trouble abundantly repaid.

THE TRANSLATOR.

ERRATA.

Page 16, line 7, *for* for which, *read* to which.

„ 17, last line but one, *for* isoltaed, *read* isolated.

„ 39, line 13, *for* assume Christ as, *read* assume Christ to be.

„ 65, five lines from bottom, *for* investigation, *read* investigations.

„ 69, line 5, *for* Jews, *read* Jew.

„ 87, line 1, *for* He had not led, *read* He had led.

„ 98, last line but two, *for* involves, *read* involve.

„ 166, last line but two, *for* now here, *read* no where.

„ 177, in the middle of the note, remove the parenthesis after Matt. xx. 1—16,
and before ὁ ἐὰν ᾧ δίκαιον.

„ 209, first line of note, *for* applied, *read* referred.

„ 371, last line, *for* in its relation, *read* in relation.

„ 381, line 8, *for* yet throws, *read* throws yet.

„ 422, line 14, *for* he will not desire, *read* he will desire.

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INTRODUCTION.

WHOEVER has made himself sufficiently acquainted with the Bible to form a judgment as to its purpose, will easily perceive it to be a collection of writings intended to impart information upon the most important interests of the human race to men of different countries and times, and differing widely in mental capacities and acquirements. The Bible, however, does not impart this information in a scientific or systematic manner, certain writings being devoted to beginners, to be fully comprehended by them, and others to the more advanced, to be comprehended in their fullest import, by such only as have prepared themselves for the task by the study of the former. Every one of them contains what may become profitable to all, whatever be their intellectual or moral condition. Some of these writings are certainly more easily understood than others, and agreeably to the expressed purpose of their authors, more adapted to the requirements of beginners, while

others are intended to open a deeper insight to the more practised and advanced. This is by no means to be overlooked; but what we have said is, nevertheless, applicable to all of them. Indeed, the same passage which is to make the beginner acquainted with the first elements of truth, is often intended as a means of profounder knowledge for the more advanced; and it is the experience of every one who reads the Scripture with an honest desire for truth, that a continued study of it in all its parts, combined with a practical application of the truths so discovered to the circumstances of life, discloses to him what he had not understood before, or establishes a connection between parts which had formerly appeared unconnected, thus gradually extending his insight in compass, depth and unity.

It cannot, therefore, be doubted, that these writings require different methods of interpretation, according to the spiritual condition and wants of their readers, and that the demand for an interpretation universally intelligible, universally applicable and sufficient for all times and individuals, involves an impossibility. We are all of us to be trained "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephes. iv. 13). "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, while

babes are to be fed with milk " (Heb. v. 13, 14; 1 Cor. iii. 2). A knowledge and realization of Christianity so perfect as to be incapable of increase, is, from its nature, impossible, its object being infinite and consequently unattainable by humanity, though a proportionate increase takes place in our power of comprehending it, the nearer we approach it.

Christianity does not announce itself as a body of knowledge to be appropriated and worked up, nor as a science by the study of which we may and ought to reach our final destination; it proclaims itself as a spiritual power, intended to penetrate and regenerate the whole man in his innermost being, and cannot, therefore, be understood thoroughly by a part, as it were, of the human mind. It cannot in its fulness and essence be comprehended and appreciated by man until it has begun to exercise an influence upon him; nor can its influence cease at any time during life, its object being to train him up to likeness with God. Christ promises assurance of the divinity of His doctrine, not to those who contemplate it from without, or attempt to fathom it by the understanding, but to those who make the practice of it the end and aim of their inward life. In some respects, therefore, Christianity may not inaptly be compared with the arts. It is impossible by mere

contemplation or theory to become imbued with the creative power of art, and he alone can hope to become an artist in the true sense of the word, who applies the rules, which he may perhaps at first have adopted only upon the authority of a master, and thus prepares himself for the knowledge and practice of rules of a higher order. Moreover, the arts cannot be acquired or practised without a natural disposition and a happy genius, the want of which would render all rules unprofitable. In both instances the comparison holds good. This does not, however, in any way argue against the universal efficacy of Christianity, which it must needs possess if it be as it proclaims itself, a divine dispensation for the salvation of all men; for it affirms that this disposition lies dormant in all men, but that it requires to be awakened; and it proves itself universal by also originating such an awakening. If this be the case, it will follow as a natural consequence that even where the understanding is considerably developed, Christianity cannot be comprehended and appreciated while this disposition lies as yet dormant, and that something beyond an acute understanding and learning must be required for this purpose, just as a man may possess these in an eminent degree, and yet be totally unequal to the production of works of art, or even to the

appreciation of the arts themselves.—Whoever has attained to so high a degree of Christianity as to feel assured of the truth of his own view and interpretation of Scripture, will assuredly not be led astray or be tempted to abandon his higher view for a lower one, because others, however learned and acute, cannot elevate themselves to the same point; any more than a true votary of art will doubt its inherent truth, because there are men devoid of all sense for it, or than the disciples of Christ can be supposed to have doubted the deeper sense of a parable disclosed to them by their divine Master, because the multitude, including Pharisees and Scribes, were unable to comprehend or discover it by their own intellectual faculties. But since experience teaches us, that a great diversity of opinions has at all times existed upon points of considerable importance, even amongst those who consider themselves in possession of correct and profound views upon Christianity, which at once establishes the possibility of error; and since Christianity at the same time, invites us to exert all our energies for an increasing purity of our conception, it becomes a question of the greatest importance, what course we are to take in order to attain to this end, and by what means we may become assured, that what we consider a just conception, or what others offer us as such, is

not founded in error, but is in accordance with the truth, in as far as we are able to fathom it. Just as there is a science of art, which will prove a furtherance even to its greatest votaries and guard them against error, it is to be presumed that we may derive similar advantages also in the province of religion through experience and reflection.

An inquiry into this important subject will certainly not be considered out of place, as the epistle of the Apostle Paul, which we purpose to examine, though designed to impart a deeper insight into Christianity, has long been interpreted in such various, and in part contradictory ways, that what was intended to produce union has occasioned the greatest divisions, and that many have not only lost the inestimable benefit which they might thence have derived, but have been actually led into the grossest errors, altogether repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, while others, to escape from such errors, have thought it advisable to leave a portion of the most precious substance of this Scripture altogether unapplied.

While stating in the following pages our views as to the interpretation of the Scriptures in general, we shall at the same time shew for what class of readers our work is chiefly intended.

All communications of ideas through the organ

of speech, from whomsoever they may proceed, necessarily require clothing. The idea being spiritual, must, as it were, be embodied by the speaker and again disembodied by the hearer, in order to reach his mind. Whoever has to make communications of a higher order, must lower himself to the level of his hearers; he can communicate to them in the first instance that only, for which there is some analogy in the ideas which they already possess, and he will have to derive the outward form of his speech from the objects and ideas with which his hearers are conversant; his discourse will have to be suited to time, place, and nation. The reader or interpreter of writings composed in times long gone by, must, therefore, in order to compass their meaning, be intimately acquainted with the language, images and ideas of those times; and, for this reason, grammatical and historical studies will be the first and indispensable condition for all correct interpretation.

But this attention to time and language, and to the relations existing between the writer and his readers, are to be considered as preliminary requisites only. We thereby transpose ourselves, as much as may be, into the position and circumstances of those to whom the discourse was more immediately addressed, but that which remained to be done by them in order to com-

prehend the spirit of the communication, will also remain to be done by ourselves, after these preparatory studies have been completed; nay, they cannot even be completed without this spiritual perception, with which it must necessarily proceed hand in hand. For if we desire to become thoroughly acquainted with the views and the system of any thinker through the study of his writings, the only course open to us, is to form for ourselves a comprehensive conception of the whole by connecting his isolated views, and the more correct the judgment we have formed of the whole system, the more certainly will the system itself supply us with the means for a more perfect insight into the component parts, and for the right understanding of the expressions used.—But if we were even able to transpose ourselves thoroughly into the position and circumstances of those for whom a writing was originally intended, its impression would yet be different upon different readers, as must also have been the case at the time of its composition. The preaching at the feast of Pentecost made the most widely different impressions upon the hearers, although most of them must have attached the same meaning to the words actually spoken; and we see the same phenomena daily exhibited among such as have the same means at their command for the outward comprehen-

sion of a subject. The reason for this can be no other than a difference in the inward condition of the hearers, for if this were the same with all, there could be no difference in the effect. Here, then, the important question arises: Is it by our thinking-powers alone, that we accept or reject what is offered as a truth of a higher order, or does there exist in man another receptive and examining faculty, and if so, what will be the proper application of the former in inquiries of this nature?

Christianity, as we have already intimated, assumes the existence of yet another power for its reception, since it does not apply to the faculties of the understanding in order to prove the existence of God and of a spiritual world, but enunciates these truths as absolute certainties and speaks of the immediate witnessing of the Spirit as superior to all understanding; but it nevertheless appeals also to the intellectual powers of man, as, for example, when St. Paul invites us to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good, or when St. Peter requires all men to be ready to give an account of the grounds of their hope, which would be impossible without the aid of the thinking-powers. If it be maintained, then, by some, that reason has no voice in matters of faith or of convictions of a higher order, such an assumption, if it be at all deserving

of notice, must mean something else than that, the thinking-faculties of man are not to be applied at all to the interpretation of the Scriptures and of religion in general. This would be at variance both with the Bible and the nature of man, since we can neither lay the understanding under interdict, nor assume as truth anything contradictory to its laws. The error appears to me undoubtedly to consist in this, that the results of pure thought are confounded with the application of the laws of thought to given subjects. We shall find that a closer investigation of pure thought and its results, as well as of human nature, as our experience exhibits it, confirms the fact presupposed by Christianity, namely, that, independently of the knowledge which we attain by the operation of the understanding, there is something immediately or absolutely certain in man, that there exists another source from which he derives knowledge; and this will furnish us with an opportunity for ascertaining the legitimate use to be made of the understanding in examining truths of a higher order.

The laws of thought are the common property of the whole human race, they are the property of the whole spiritual world. If it must be admitted, that the capacities for their application are widely different in different men, these laws themselves are uniform and, rightly applied to

the same subject or the same premises, must infallibly lead to the same conclusions. If then, the pure thinking-powers, abstracting from all that they do not find within themselves, and as it were annihilating the existing world, propose to reconstruct it out of elements inherent within themselves alone, and if the several thinkers who have undertaken to solve this problem, by the proper application of the laws of thought have not arrived at the same result, this diversity must either be imaginary and a consequence only of the different direction of their reasonings, and in this case, one system might be an amplification or continuation of a previous system but would yet be intrinsically the same,—although the proof of this identity by substitutions (as in mathematics) might be exceedingly difficult—or else the results are really different and contradictory, and in this case the cause of the diversity is evidently to be found only in the fact, that the axioms from which the different thinkers had started, must have been partially drawn from another province than that of the pure understanding, so that they all, or at least all with the exception of one, must, whether consciously or not, have deviated from their first principle. In the latter case, as there can evidently be but one system of pure thinking, it would have to be ascertained and proved which is this

system, and by it the import of the results would have to be tested, and the fact established, that this system contained all the truths of which man is really in possession; and the same proof would have to be given in the case of the identity of all the systems, and only if this had been done could it be maintained, that all human truths have their root in the understanding.

The burden of this most difficult proof would lie with him, who would claim universal and absolute dominion for his system. We cannot of course here enter into any such investigation; fortunately, however, there is an easier method to obtain with certainty what we require. As we are addressing ourselves exclusively to readers who possess a consciousness of God, as the Scriptures shew Him, namely, as the absolute self-conscious First Cause of the universe, whose essence is love; and who must needs therefore reject all systems that are irreconcilable with the God of love and do not lead to Him, the question which we have asked, whether the thinking-powers alone are sufficient to accept or reject what is offered to us as a truth of a higher order, may be replaced by the question: Whether the consciousness of God is a product of the faculties of our understanding, and whether it has its root in them or elsewhere.

We have said before, that the laws of thought

are the common property of the whole human race, and of the spiritual world in general. This is undeniable ; but we must recollect that in purely spiritual beings, conception, judgment, and conclusion, or cause, effect, etc., are not to be considered as isolated and following each other in time, as with human beings. We find it proved by our own experience, that the more spiritual we become, the more does the idea of time vanish, and thought, action, and resolve, become immediate. Whoever, for instance, has thoroughly mastered a scientific subject, will attain to a result with a certain immediateness, while a person of less proficiency would attain to it only by laborious combinations. Where the divine rule of life has taken possession of the soul of man, he will at once reject what is at variance with it, without having occasion to find by reflection and investigation what his duty may be in each particular case. This approach to immediateness, to which we are trained in manifold ways during the course of our life, establishes more clearly by analogy, what an exalted idea of God would already have convinced us of, namely, that in God contemplation, reflection, resolve and action cannot be thought of as following each other, but must be coincident and immediate. Our human divided faculties, however, are unable to compre-

hend this undivided unity in God, and we cannot form any idea of God at all, otherwise than by humanly analysing his essence. We must not, however, forget that this is only an expedient of our own human weakness; but, it is nevertheless certain that we cannot attribute qualities to God for which we find nothing analogous within ourselves, and equally certain also that we could not have any idea of good within ourselves, if it did not in its essence exist in God. In a certain sense, therefore, we cannot help attributing to God the quality of thinking or reasoning, (which we imperfectly express by all-wisdom and omniscience) and deriving our own laws of reasoning from Him. If we attempted to imagine a God without the faculty of thinking, He would at once cease to be God, and nothing but the idea of fate would remain. But there is this essential distinction to be drawn between the thinking or reasoning of God and that of man, that in God it proceeds at once and immediately from his whole essence, and cannot be imagined as proceeding only from a part of his being. His essence being love, his thinking cannot be imagined as distinct from his love; while human thinking can exist without love. We can not only imagine thinking without love, but what we call thinking has in reality nothing of love in it. Human thinking, therefore, is fallen

from unity, but is nevertheless from God, and in order to become once more like God's, it must necessarily be re-united or, indeed, become one with love. Our immediate rejection of wrong, without the need of reflection, may be considered a step towards this consummation.

This furnishes a conclusive answer to the above question. How could we possibly, through our isolated thinking-powers, which do not include love, comprehend God, who is all love, since it is impossible that mutual comprehension and attraction should exist, where there is no correlation. The more purely human our thinking, that is, the more it excludes love, the less will it be able to draw from its own stores the elements of divine truth. Our consciousness of God then has not its root in the understanding, but in another power inherent in our mind, namely, in love. It is for this reason that St. John says: "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John, iv. 7 and 8). It is for this reason that St. Paul declares love (the only purely divine principle) to be alone eternal, never failing, when all other things shall fail (1 Cor. xiii.), when all knowledge will cease, that is, when all knowledge will cease to have an isolated existence. Our thinking, and all its results, must

blend and become one with love, before we shall have reached a state of perfection.

We cannot, therefore, wonder that the labours of all, who have endeavoured to attain truth by pure thinking alone, should have failed of the desired result; we see clearly, on the contrary, that the more closely they adhered to their own system, that is to say, the more they excluded all that is not inherent in the understanding alone, the less have they been able to approach absolute truth. Whether in their speculations they considered the world which they contemplated as real or ideal; whether they considered themselves reasoning as individuals, or whether by abstraction they created in their imagination, out of the mass of individual thinkers, one absolute thinker; or whether they endeavoured, by abstracting both from the thinker and his results, to exalt themselves to pure thought, and to seek therein the real cause or, at least, the real type of being—never have they been able to attain aught but an illusory shadow of truth, instead of the truth itself, so long as the understanding remained their only element, in which there is neither creative power nor love. Nay, in these speculations, the very idea of the possibility of absolutely pure thought could never have been formed, if the world had not existed as an object of speculation, any more

than the idea of sight, without a being to see and an object to be seen. But whence is the thinker to obtain the certainty, that the world, which is the object of his speculation, is really the creation of God in its original perfection, from which alone the true divine laws could possibly be derived, even if he were to employ the world only as a means to derive from it the methods for his speculative reasoning, and from this again the true divine laws of being? If, as the Scriptures intimate, the original creation of God experienced an essential change through evil originating therein as a principle in direct opposition to God (a fact for which, in a world created by the Only-Good, no human speculation has ever been able to account); and if the world, as it now presents itself to our contemplation, has been so ordered by God, that the divine laws can evince themselves in their purity only by and after the removal of evil, how is it possible that these divine laws should be deducible by speculation from the world as it now is? Or can speculation prove that this is not so? Or will the speculator dare to transfer himself by his own strength from this disorganised world, to which he himself belongs, to the standing point of God Himself, and to deduce from his own being the real idea of the Deity? Would this be possible, while he does not possess

love equal to the love of God ; and, if he did, how came he to belong to this world, which has fallen from love ?

Now if, as we have seen, the understanding cannot, from its inherent elements alone, find truth, because, in its one-sided direction, it is devoid of the most important element of truth—it follows also that its deductions cannot be applied as a test to that which is offered to us as divine truth. If pure thought agreeably to its own postulate, had admitted as the object of its speculation nothing but what it found inherent within itself, it would have rendered service to the cause of truth in a negative way by convincing the thinker himself, his results being devoid of all that is divine, that the divine principle which has gained life in him, and of which he finds himself in positive possession, not being a product of the understanding, must spring from some other source, for which it would then be his first duty to search. The glorious powers of thought, after having accomplished in one direction all that is possible, would then turn to where there is thus another wide field open for their operations. Although it was certainly natural and even necessary that the human mind should try its powers in this direction, there is nothing to compel it to confine its exertions to it. For unless man have,

through this one-sided tendency of his mind, renounced, as it were, a portion of himself, nothing will oblige him either to pre-suppose the highest truth to be attainable through the understanding or by means of its laws alone, or to assume, that whatever is not developed as a consequence by its operations, is to be rejected as devoid of truth. On the contrary, our consciousness of God and spiritual existence, of love, conscience and all kindred qualities, is as positive and as much the common property of our race as our thinking-faculties; it has the same claims to general acknowledgment and will vindicate them at some time or other, if they are denied. But it is by no means an easy matter to distinguish between that which we possess as positive certainty from another source, and the products of our understanding, or even to prove the necessity of the distinction. No man is altogether without some consciousness of the existence of God and of divine principles (of that indeed to which we have adverted as emanating from another source,) although that which may have gained life in individuals differs as much in degree as the thinking-powers differ. And it is this very circumstance which has induced the most enlightened thinkers to aim at greater certainty on this point. God and immortality have at all times been the most important subjects of human enquiry; but

while all certainty respecting them was supposed to be a result of the thinking-faculties alone, it was natural to attribute to them also the positive convictions, which have reached us from another source; and indeed this error is easily accounted for, as, although these convictions are not a product of our thinking-powers, yet without their help we cannot, as human beings, become conscious of them. But this error as to the source of our knowledge may lead us into great dangers. The thinker, thus drawing into the province of the understanding elements which have their origin elsewhere, and obtaining from them results, to a certain degree satisfactory to himself, in which God, immortality, and other most important subjects are introduced and disposed of, may be led to close his mind to the influences from that other source, whose existence as a votary of mere understanding, he does not acknowledge. Nay, more, if his system contain much that bears affinity or resemblance to Christianity, or if he have adapted his system to some of its most important truths—he may even lead himself and others into the error that Christianity is, in a nobler form, essentially a product of his system, or actually identical with it. It is a sacred duty to caution against this fatal error; and we would recommend the following observations to the impartial consideration of

our readers. They are not intended as directed against any particular philosophical system, but as generally applicable to all.

Christianity announces itself as immediately divine, and as the only way to truth. Entering into a world already in existence, it appeals to a power in man which is not the production of the understanding or identical with it, and re-suscitates therein the naturally inherent but suppressed consciousness of the existence of a self-conscious God as the First Cause of all things both visible and invisible, a God acting by his own absolute authority, that is to say, according to laws inherent within Himself, and of a spiritual world, to which man according to his true nature belongs. It is only after this once dormant power has been awakened and gained strength, that Christianity undertakes to unfold to man's mind the spiritual world in its true logical relations, as well as the nature and cause of the connection between the spiritual and the visible world—and it undertakes to accomplish this from the spiritual elements in which man now feels himself to be actually living, and for the existence of which he therefore requires no further proof.—Now, if Christianity is what it proclaims itself to be, nothing can possibly exist of higher importance to man; no human wisdom beyond or even beside it can point out another way to truth,

and therefore true human wisdom can have no grander aim than to explore it in its greatest depths, and to render it more evident and accessible to the human mind.—Moreover, Christianity teaches, that the reason of all men is now more or less in a state of darkness (this, however, does not contradict the unchangeableness of the *laws* of thought) ; it teaches that man requires a help from above to attain truth, (that is to say, that he requires the removal of the hindrances which prevent his embracing the highest objects of thought and ascertaining their logical connection), and further, that in order to find and appropriate truth, he has to acknowledge his helplessness, and in humility to submit to the Helper. To him, however, who accepts this help in faith, and by a persevering application of the means offered him becomes capable of a life according to the divine order, that is, capable of a purely spiritual life, it promises eternal blessedness and everlasting individual existence. No philosophical system, which rejects an influence from above, or considers reason, in its present state, infallible and sufficient for the attainment of truth, or which refers man, for the purpose of reaching his final destination, to a power which it is not able to furnish, and which Christianity declares to be insufficient, or which makes the individual exist-

ence of man cease at his death--no such philosophical system can consequently be identical with Christianity. Their results differing essentially at every stage, it is evident that no identity between Christianity and such philosophical systems can be established by mere substitutions.

What we have said will explain how it was possible that so many systems should exist together and one after the other, each professing to be the philosophy of pure reason. Their differences are not to be traced to the unchangeable laws of logic, but to the premises to which these have been applied. The reason of man, in the sense in which we here apply the word, is the sum total of all that he has received from the source of the highest intelligence, and that has really become part of his essence, acted upon by, and united with, his thinking-powers. But this differing in degree amongst all men, it follows, that more or less of error is still involved, and therefore the results deduced from differing axioms and premises must also differ. Each philosophical system may contain some truth, but not one of them the whole truth.

Now, as there is not *one* human reason, and as even the reason of the individual cannot be perfect, but is only advancing towards perfection, it will be easily seen that the general demand that truths of a higher order should be tested by

reason, contains much that is vague and indefinite, and requires a closer investigation. Whose reason is to be the general standard, that of Plato, Spinoza, Kant, or my own? and if the latter, as it is at this moment, or as it may have been ten years ago, or may be ten years hence? How is anything that is changeable to be the measure for that which is unchangeable? Such testing of the unchangeable by a standard subject to change, can have its ground only in a misconception of the true nature and dignity of the subject, and, since it makes the individual in the poverty of his mind fancy himself rich, must have the effect of producing one-sidedness, narrow-mindedness and self-sufficiency, obstruct the flowings from the divine source, and convert that, which by its nature is life, into stagnation and death. The truth of this observation has been woefully confirmed by the experiences of the times just gone by, and oh! that they were indeed gone by for ever! The repudiation and contempt of the highest revelation has dragged all that is heavenly down into the dust of the earth; and the consequences of so perverse a tendency of the mind have become but too lamentably manifest.

After these preliminary enquiries, we now proceed to consider what then remains as the business of the faculty of thought, considered as

an isolated power, in testing what is offered to us as truth of a higher order. If the thinking-powers, as we have seen, are unable to excogitate truth, they will be unable also to recognise as truth what is offered as such. How could the most acute thinker possibly recognise the true nature of love, when he hears it explained, if he were himself altogether devoid of it? Love cannot be demonstrated to the understanding, because there is no analogy between them. A mere thinker might take the most visible effects of love for dissimulation, pretence, or narrowness of mind. If the characteristic marks or properties of love were submitted to his judgment, he would be competent to discover whether any amongst them were inconsistent with others. If he were told that love is meek and seeks not its own, he would have to admit that a passionate, selfish person cannot be of a loving disposition, but the essence or nature of love he would not comprehend. The business of such a critical power, which can do no more than reject such marks or characteristics as are inconsistent with others, without being able to recognise anything in its essence or make it available, would be little more than a mere intellectual amusement or a mere calculation with symbols of unknown quantities, so long as the object submitted to it remained devoid of reality,

or so long as the thinker remained unable to establish in the shape of a tangible idea, what has reached him from the higher source of intelligence ; exactly as pure mathematics could be of no practical utility to the world in which we live, if there were no objects to which their formulae could be applied, without which indeed the science could never have existed at all. But as pure mathematics, properly applied to the objects of the visible world, have not only enabled us to prove the untenableness of the different systems of the universe founded in error, but have led to the knowledge of the correct system, and have taught us what course to take in order to reach still greater knowledge ; so will the proper application of our thinking-powers to the truths of which we are really in possession, not only enable us to point out the fallacies in the systems of vain wisdom, but also shew us what we have still to aim at, and how to concentrate all our knowledge on different subjects in that great unity, which the nature of our spirit irresistibly urges us to seek. In our present condition, the sublime office of the thinking-faculties is to humanise what is divine without doing violence to its divine nature, while they thereby become more and more divine in themselves. But in order that they may fulfil this their sublime purpose, they must, as

we have seen, by degrees cease to act as an isolated power, and become closely united, or indeed identified with love. The more nearly man approaches this consummation, although it is not to be reached in our present condition, the more, and as it were by a spiritual instinct of a higher order, which is the characteristic of a life of spiritual freedom, will he be secured against error.

We thus recognise our thinking-powers, not as a creative but as a critical and discriminating faculty, unable to *find* truth, but making what has reached us from another source available in our human condition, and as such only can we apply them in accordance with their true object, without detracting from their high importance and yet without adorning what is finite with infinite honours, or exalting to dominion what is intended to be subservient only to higher purposes.

In whomsoever the consciousness of God, as the absolute and sole cause of all, has gained life, and who has thereby the full assurance that God alone knows absolutely, the object and intrinsic connection of all things, and that He alone, therefore, can be the source of all truth, and who will consequently be free from the vain presumption, that that portion of truth which he now possesses and which he can have received only from that one source, has raised his knowledge to the level of God's, and that he has the whole truth within

himself, will not only, in his further search after truth, raise his view to this sole source, but he will also admit, that there may be channels by which truth can flow to him other than those imagined by man or recognisable by his imperfect conceptions and ideas. The more exalted his ideas become of that God who is a spirit, surrounded by a pure spiritual world, by a light which no one can approach ; the more positively he feels the contrast between that spiritual world of God and the visible world including error and evil ; the more he becomes convinced, that it is the ungodly and impure principle within him which hinders the perception of truth ; and the more he feels the deep significance of Christ's words, that the pure in heart alone can see God, the source of all truth—the more lively will his conviction become, that there is something beyond the thinking-powers required to attain truth, and that in a state of degradation he cannot by his own strength apprehend what is so much exalted above him, but that on the contrary the divine principle must purify and exalt reason, in order to accomplish a true union. He will feel convinced that the contemplation of the outward form of things will not disclose to him their inward nature, and that no one can convey truth to him unless he have obtained it from the sole source of truth, and he will not

reject any one, or consider him unworthy of his attention, *because* of his telling him that he has been sent from above to proclaim truth, and to shew the path for its attainment.

But the existence of God and of a spiritual world, to which man by his inward nature belongs, and for which he is to be trained, renders revelation not only possible, but absolutely necessary. We shall, however, have to abandon all childish notions on the subject, and understand by the word revelation, the communication of all truths which man requires for the attainment of his final destination and which are not accessible to him through the contemplation of the visible world or deducible by the operation of his own understanding. All that is absolutely certain to him respecting the spiritual world can have reached him only from thence, since we find no analogies for it elsewhere, and we have, therefore, to consider as revelation in a wider sense, all that we find ourselves endowed with on our entrance into the world, as a gift in the germ, as it were, requiring development during our life. No man can be altogether without it; he would else have no fellowship whatever with the spiritual world, and could not be trained for it by his life, for he would possess no nucleus for further knowledge, nothing to which what he is yet to receive might be superadded. That this

gift, however, is possessed in very different degrees, is evident; and, therefore, whatever one man, who has a richer store, may communicate to another so that he may appropriate it, is in reality a further divine revelation for him. Of the rule by which this gift is dispensed, we cannot know anything, so long as we have no knowledge of the state of the human spirit on its entrance into the world, and so long as we are unable to account for the indisputable fact of our possessing such widely different dispositions. We need not, therefore, wonder to find the Scriptures speak of certain men, who have been filled with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb — We have no reason, however, to consider this method of imparting spiritual communications or revelations as the only one. Since man belongs to the spiritual world, he must needs, during his present life, remain in some connection with it, although he may not be intuitively conscious of the fact. It is, therefore, not only possible that this connection may, under peculiar circumstances, manifest itself more clearly and sensibly, but it was, even prior to experience, probable that it would do so, since the spiritual gifts of men and their culture differ so widely. Our experience has confirmed the fact from the remotest ages; and it would certainly be much *against reason* if we were to

doubt the fact because by abstract thinking, which, as we have seen, cannot even prove the existence of a spiritual world, we are unable to account for such manifestations of it. We need not, however, look upon them as violations of the laws of nature which God himself has laid down, or as miracles agreeably to the childish ideas of the multitude, but rather as effects of these same laws, although our present knowledge of nature is unable to explain them, because we have no insight into the real connection between the spiritual and the material world. On the other hand, we must also take care not to consider all states of exaltation as of the same character or value, or all that may be viewed in moments of exaltation as real glances into the spiritual world or as divine revelations. For quite independently of wilful deception and of the manifold effects of a diseased imagination, it is very evident that no one can attain to really spiritual perceptions except in so far as he is spiritually pure (although we have no human standard for such purity), and that the spiritual light must necessarily be refracted and obscured by the earthly atmosphere of the communicator as well as of the hearer. But the more difficult it is to distinguish truth from falsehood in such matters, and the more dangerous the error, the greater ought our caution to be in judging of

such phenomena. Yet, if they proved no more, they would, at all events, prove a real connection to exist between the visible and the invisible world, and notwithstanding the great and essential difference between such phenomena and the immediate perceptions of the spiritual eye, they are sufficient to convince us that the denying of the possibility of the latter does not prove a freedom from prejudice, but, on the contrary, an obscuration of the judgment or a one-sided tendency of the mind.

The most essential conditions for a just and worthy interpretation of the Scriptures will, therefore, be a mind open to the impressions of the divine revelations, and a readiness to test them in simplicity of heart, by the standard of the truth of which we are already in positive possession, together with the acknowledgment that this standard is not invariable or sufficient for all times and all men, but that it must become more perfect, as the truth increases within us. This standard, to express it in few words, is none other for every individual than *the consciousness of God which has gained life within him*. For that alone can be a revelation to a man in the proper sense of the word, or a furtherance of truth, which strengthens, extends and exalts his consciousness of God as the most powerful, most wise, and most loving Being, and

which thus leads him to a freer, truer, and more earnest conception of the world and its objects. Whatever would lower or obscure this consciousness, can never be a revelation for him, and he must reject it, whether it be presented to him as human wisdom or as pretended divine revelation. Whatever is not at variance with his sublimest conceptions, but nevertheless does not as yet contribute to exalt them, he will have neither to accept nor to reject ; he will have to await some future time, when he may be in possession of a higher standard to determine him. Thus, different subjective views of the truth may and will exist together at the same time, which may yet rest on the same foundation, and therefore not be without objective reality.

In testing in this manner what is offered to us as divine truth, we make the only proper use of reason in subjects of this description, since we do not measure what is infinite by an earthly, but what is divine by its own standard. It is true this is only the imperfect standard of which we are as yet in possession, but what other could we possibly apply ? And by applying this standard, our reason will comprehend all that it is at the time able to comprehend, and as it acknowledges this standard to be variable and imperfect, it will not consider as concluded what is in its nature infinite, and what, therefore, is

not to be declared as concluded and perfect by any human being.

This, then, is also conclusive against all accepting of truth upon authority, or from a blind adherence to the letter, against which we have to guard ourselves, as well as against an erroneous application of our thinking-powers in the interpretation of subjects of a higher order. Faith upon authority evidently applies a human standard or, at least, a standard not our own, to divine subjects, and what we have thus accepted, or imagine that we have accepted, cannot possibly be our real indisputable possession. For, as the standard does not belong to the individual, and is therefore not an immediate and inalienable certainty, or, as it were, a part of his own being, he may be deprived of it either by true or by specious arguments; and if his standard be destroyed, what he has measured by it will be destroyed at the same time; together with the foundation the superstructure will fall, and even if this should not actually happen, it is evident that what he possesses by such uncertain tenure, will be continually exposed to danger, and is not therefore a real but an imaginary possession only. Our daily experience confirms the truth of this assertion. Suppose an individual had accepted Christianity as true and divine upon the authority of the Bible alone, he

would certainly, under other circumstances, have also accepted the Mahometan doctrine as true and divine; and as in that case he would have accepted an untruth for the truth, so also will the truth which he has accepted upon *such grounds* not be truth *to him*. If, on the other hand, a Mahometan accepts as divine truth that which has passed into Mahometanism from the source of all truth, because his inward convictions admit it as divine, and because it exalts his ideas of God and brings him into closer connection with Him, it cannot be doubted but that he has really received a divine revelation.—A conscientious searcher of the Bible, therefore, will not consider himself bound by any previously accepted systems, nor any previously established human opinions. While acknowledging to their full extent the merits of former searchers after truth, he will never forget that truth must needs always take its outward form in accordance with the times, and that this form, as an earthly product, must be perishable.—Similar arguments will apply to the opinions founded upon adherence to the letter, upon the outward form, and not upon the spirit deposited therein. The letter is variable and finite, and cannot be the standard for the invariable and infinite. It is of two-fold importance to recognise the spirit clothed in words, first that we may not be led into error

by taking the form for the substance ; and next, that we may not be repulsed by the outward form, and leave unnoticed the spirit which pervades it. If any one, for instance, on reading that God spoke with Moses from a burning bush, were to take these words in their strictly literal sense, and suppose that he thereby possessed the truth itself, he should bethink himself, whether his mind have really thereby received nourishment ; whether his consciousness of God have been exalted, his comprehension of the divine government of the world extended, or his love of God have gained in strength. If this be not the case, what will he have profited by the communication ? Such believing will not rid him of any former error, and may indeed supply nourishment to the evil that is in him, as it may possibly induce him to overrate his faith, with which it has nothing to do. But if, on the other hand, we were to consider a communication of a higher order unworthy of our notice, or reject it, because we object to the form in which it is presented to us, we might, through presumption or prejudice, lose what might, rightly and spiritually understood, have proved a blessing. An unprejudiced enquirer after truth, will have to distinguish the idea from its outward form, and to examine whether the latter may not have been the most appropriate for the moral or intellectual

condition, or for the scope of the ideas of those for whom it was originally intended; whether the idea, clothed in such a form, may not have extended their consciousness of God, and whether it may not do the same for him, inasmuch, at least, as it may lead him to trace the progress of the human race, and the connection between their history and their gradual deliverance from error. We find deeds recorded of Christ, which we call miracles, because we are unable to explain their connection with those laws of nature, with which we have become conversant. If any one were to assume Christ as the son of God, *only* on account of these miracles, he would in reality have gained nothing by such an assumption. He might not only, under certain circumstances, take an impostor for a true prophet, if similar deeds were narrated of him, but he might also take a necromancer for a heaven-sent messenger, if he saw him, by the help of natural powers unknown to himself, perform deeds for which he is unable to account. And as the belief in the latter might be destroyed by a mere explanation of the natural powers employed by him, *such* belief in Christ might also be destroyed by a plausible explanation of the miracles, or even by raising doubts in respect to them; and his mind would have gained absolutely nothing by such a belief. On the other hand, if any one were to turn away

from the Gospel, because he finds deeds recorded of Christ, which he does not know how to reconcile with his knowledge of the laws of nature, he would not only reject the most glorious and sublime revelation that has ever been vouchsafed to man, but he would, while he considers himself acting according to reason, be acting in direct opposition to it, because he would be declaring that impossible, which is merely inexplicable to him, without recollecting that all human insight into the powers of nature, and their connection with each other, is as yet most imperfect, and that there might exist a physical science of a higher order, by which miraculous deeds might be proved to be in accordance with higher spiritual laws, although inexplicable to the philosopher, who has only the results of earthly experience for his guide. A real seeker after truth will therefore turn his view to the spirit and the inward connection of the doctrine and life of Christ, and if then the truths of which he had formerly but a faint glimmering, evince themselves as really divine, by exalting his idea of God and increasing his love, confidence and submission, and by strengthening his conviction of his fellowship with the spiritual kingdom, and if he feel the promise fulfilled, that his insight and inward peace grow by the practice of what he has acquired, he will by degrees obtain that

certainty which no influences from without can shake, because it is not founded on anything that is outward. And thus convinced of the divineness of the source from which his knowledge flows, he will also know that error and truth cannot flow from the same source, and he will, at all times distinguishing the idea from its outward form, not make the truth of the doctrine dependent upon that of the miracles, but he will never doubt the intrinsic truth of the narrative, because he cannot account for the miracles. Is it possible that an insight into the spiritual connections of nature should ever be opened to us otherwise than by our thus raising ourselves to a really spiritual life? God being the creator of both the visible and the invisible world, there must needs be a connection between them; moreover the laws of nature also are spiritual, because they are from God, and God is a spirit. All therefore must proceed from the Spirit, nature and her laws, as well as our knowledge concerning them.

It is, however, in the spiritual world alone, that we can assume such knowledge as necessarily existing. It is certainly not attainable in our present condition, and least of all by our own exertions. This leads us to the consideration of a further danger, which we have carefully to avoid in our search for truth, and in our inter-

pretation of the Bible. It is not the object of our human existence to anticipate a future state by overstepping the conditions of the present, but to prepare us for it by gradual training. Whoever therefore should suppose himself capable of leading in this world a life reserved for a state of perfection, instead of following the preparatory course pointed out for him, might not inaptly be compared to a student, who would attempt to master the greatest difficulties of a science before he had acquired a knowledge of its rudiments. He would run the risk of supplying by phantoms of his imagination, what he had neglected to acquire by experience and reflection; he would lose himself in a vague and shifting state of mere feeling and impressions, instead of attaining to a vigorous spiritual life. It is but too evident how uncertain and arbitrary the interpretation of the Bible must necessarily be under such circumstances. The most spiritual sense of the Scriptures is certainly the nearest to truth, but the most spiritual interpretation for our present condition is that which elucidates the connection of the earthly and the spiritual, and the gradual transition from the one to the other in the most intelligible and most satisfactory manner.

But in order not to prejudice either those whom we may consider to adhere too closely to

the letter or outward form, nor those who may appear to insist too exclusively upon following out their own spiritual views, let us remember that the desire to avoid one extreme is but too apt to lead us into the other, and that the actual standing points and requirements of men differ to such an extent, that what may be useful for the one may have ceased to be so, or not yet have become so, for the other, and that on this account a path may be the right path for some and yet not be the only right path. Above all things, however, let us remember that the same inward convictions may be consistent with great outward disparity. Our methods of communicating our convictions do not depend upon these convictions alone, nor are the talents and the desire for their communication by any means uniformly distributed, amongst all individuals. Even among the Apostles, who were all filled with the same Holy Ghost, we notice a great disparity in this respect, and we cannot but be thankful for this as a most wise dispensation of God, who has thus afforded to each of us the opportunity of choosing in the first instance that form of representation, which may be most congenial to our condition at the time, thus rendering us fit for more exalted conceptions. While the first preachers of the Gospel in general more or less fall in with the religious views of their

time, spiritualising and exalting them as they proceed, this adaptation appearing to be with some of them in accordance with the bent of their own ideas and personal necessities, with others, on the other hand, a condescension to the capacities of their readers—we find St. John living so completely in spiritual intuition, that he appears for himself to have hardly any need for outward forms, or for a logical connection of his ideas. It is for this reason that his writings appear mysterious and unconnected to many, while congenial spirits derive from them the most immediate and sublime enjoyment. In the whole historical development of Christianity, we can trace similar diversities in respect to outward representation; all these different forms have been intended to serve, and have served, for the inward progress and furtherance of all who were seeking the divine truth which each of them contains. This has been proved by experience; and indeed there was every reason to expect the fact beforehand, because if only one outward form existed by which the object might be accomplished, God, who is love, and wills that all should find succour and attain to the knowledge of the truth, would have provided that this only form had been accessible to all. This fact of the Spirit's acting under so many different forms ought to prove, above all other things, that we

do not come into complete possession of divine truths by bringing them into a logical connection with our general knowledge, or by making them apparent to our understanding by means of reflection alone. We are in actual possession of those divine truths only, which give a divine direction to our will, produce self-denial, and induce us to relinquish our selfish purposes, or, in a word, which increase our love, even where we are unable to demonstrate the spiritual grounds for our actions in logical sequence. A higher logic will never be wanting where we act from love, because in love, in God, there is true inward unity.

Nevertheless there must be *one* method of comprehension and representation superior to all others for human beings, considered as on their way to perfection and not as having altogether or nearly reached it; that, namely, which claims both the whole of the intellectual and of the intuitive powers of man, and which unites both these means of perception into the original oneness, without which man cannot be conceived as one whole. If man belong by his nature to a spiritual world and continue to live in it during his sojourn on earth, there is no contradiction involved in the assumption that he may be exalted to it. Both the Scripture and our own experience confirm this; and if the object of our

earthly life be preparation for a life in the spiritual world—and what nobler object could we imagine?—that man who has most nearly approached this end, will certainly be most able now to exalt himself to such spiritual life. But if what he has seen during his exaltation to spiritual life is to become available to him as a human being and to others, it must needs be exhibited in logical connection and in a form comprehensible to human beings. It is for this reason that St. Paul, speaking so highly of spiritual sight, nevertheless declares the gift of interpretation to be an indispensable accessory, in order that the community may be benefited by the former. He thus allots his place to the interpreter also.

But to proceed from these introductory remarks to a closer view of our subject. The Apostle Paul combined in himself, to a most extraordinary degree, the gift of spiritual vision with that of clearly representing what he and others had seen. It is he, above all the other Apostles, who makes it his particular aim to render divine truths accessible to human faculties by a logical arrangement, thus furnishing an example for all who feel the same need. Every one will find this confirmed, who reads with sufficient attention and reflection the history and writings of this extraordinary man. While yet

a youth, he had studied the religion of his forefathers in all its parts with the utmost zeal, and under the most reputed masters of his time; and, stored with all the knowledge which he had had an opportunity of acquiring, he had become a zealous defender of what he then held to be truth. But the prejudices of his times had given a wrong bias to his mind. He recognised God, not as loving all men with an equal love, but as an austere God of the Jewish nation, jealous of His honour, and enforcing the literal observance of His external laws, as having chosen for His own, a people who should be made happy to the exclusion of all others. St. Paul lived in the hope of a Messiah, but of a Messiah who was to realise the plans of his God in respect to his own people in an earthly manner; he was unable to recognise Him, who had already appeared in humility and meekness to unite all men, who had divested Himself of His divine glory to approach all and to purify and bless all, through His divine doctrine and heavenly consolation. He considered it his duty to persecute, in honour of his national God, the disciples of Him whom he did not recognise. A ray of celestial light then entered his soul in a miraculous manner; there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales, and the hindrances were removed which had prevented his seeing truth. We do not know what

preparatory training may have preceded this change in the mind of the Apostle, what doubts may have risen within him, what conflicts he may have had to encounter before the change could become apparent, which, according to its nature, is generally gradual in the mind of man. We know nothing of the nature of the light which he saw: St. Paul himself was unable to describe it; what is invisible cannot be described, what is inaudible cannot be expressed in earthly language. Whether he was in the body or out of it, he could not himself tell. And though it were an earthly brightness by which the vision was accompanied, it was no earthly light that could scatter the darkness of his spirit and enable him to gaze on truth. But the effect of the enlightening proves that it was of God. It changed the Apostle's notion of a mere national to that of a universal God, the loving Father of all. It broke through the partition-wall of national prejudice. Not Jews only, but all people and nations were to share in the kingdom of the Messiah. The earthly splendour with which his ideas had invested Him, had vanished, and he saw only the spiritual Messiah, whose kingdom is not of this world. The proud Pharisee is become a lowly disciple of those very teachers, whom but lately he would have scorned to listen to. The persecutor of Christians, regardless of

toil and pain, is changed into the zealous missionary of heavenly truth. — Here then we have all the marks of a divine revelation; an increase of the knowledge of God, exalted conceptions, self-denial, and an increased submission and love of God and the brethren. What reasonable grounds, therefore, can there be for denying the divineness of this revelation or the truth of its outward representation? What other power than that of God could ever have produced such divine results?

It is, therefore, to the effect produced upon St. Paul by the divine revelation, that we must look in order to ascertain its truth and also its nature, as far as this may be possible. Do we find the man Paul, as it were, annihilated and transformed into another being, or the fundamental principles of his character changed, and his former recollections blotted out? Do we from henceforward find him speak as an instrument of Deity, devoid of will and thought, or acquiring on a sudden a clear insight into all human relations? By no means. He is himself directed to other men for information as to his further proceedings. We find him afterwards taking counsel with himself and the other Apostles respecting the organisation of churches. He writes his epistles as occasions require them, as a called Apostle, enlightened by the Holy Ghost,

but we do not find him say that the words and expressions had been supplied by the Holy Ghost; he distinguishes that which he knows to be divine truth from that which he states as his own opinion; his former character, his enquiring and impetuous mind, are clearly apparent in all his writings, although much ennobled and elevated; he corrects opinions which he had formerly expressed, and advances in human knowledge. And indeed this could not be otherwise, if the divine truth communicated to him were to become really beneficial to him and others. Could he, as a mere outwardly acting instrument of Deity, have possibly progressed in purity and knowledge, or could he as such have made accessible to men the pure truth which, in its purity, we know to be inaccessible to them? An immediate divine communication must needs, by its nature, be purely spiritual, and can have only that which is spiritual for its object; its earthly clothing, conformable to time and place must needs be furnished by human hands. It is for this reason chiefly that we have not to look to the Scriptures for philosophical and historical instruction, and even where we think to have found such, we must consider it only as a means, and never as a final object. But quite independently of this reason, we have no grounds for supposing, that God would make immediate re-

relations on subjects which he has given us understanding to explore, the proper use of which being in itself a great and indispensable means for our spiritual progress. Natural philosophy and history attain to their true import only when they are penetrated by the divine Spirit; and it is only from a spiritual standing-point, that the true meaning of nature and the true significance of the past can be recognised, and the future unveiled.—Thus we can comprehend how St. Paul was able to see the pure truth, and thereby avoid spiritual illusions, and to attain to that spiritual unity which pervades the whole of his writings, and which is the sign and seal of truth; and how his methods of explaining and applying it to human objects, and his conception of the world, could yet become more and more extensive and perfect. He had acquired a new standard for the relations of this world; he declares old things to have passed away, all things to have become new, since he is in Christ (2 Cor. v. 16, 17); yet as a human being, he must needs apply this standard, find his own place in his new world, and search and prove, as he invites others to do, to whom he applies this declaration equally with himself.

This conception of the world proceeding from the divine Spirit, but matured in him, the man Paul, through experience, reflection and observ-

ation, the Apostle has laid down more clearly and positively than in all his other writings, in the epistle to the Roman congregation. His connection with this congregation was different in character from his connection with others, that he had himself founded, and to whom his other epistles are addressed. This epistle was, therefore, not written in consequence of any particular occurrences or inquiries, so that its author had no occasion to start from any given point, or to shape his instructions accordingly, but was at liberty to follow the natural course of his ideas. The Roman congregation included many members who had already made considerable progress, and of these the Apostle knew many personally, who had probably enjoyed the advantage of his oral instructions. This is probable, from the introduction and several observations in other places, as well as from the list of names at the end. It was the purpose of the Apostle to communicate to these men the scheme of divine redemption through Christ in its outward and inward bearing. He has accomplished his purpose with admirable skill and wisdom, inasmuch as he combats the prejudices and errors of the Jews precisely in that form in which they were at that time proving the greatest hindrance to the attainment of truth : removing as it were one obstruction after the other, he renders his

readers capable of seeing the truth in the light and connection which were at the time most appropriate to their condition.—As interpreters of this epistle, we must, therefore, above all other things, have made ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the Apostle's mind and method of reasoning, by an unremitting study and spiritual comprehension of his collective writings, and, by a careful comparison with the immediate words of Christ, have attained to the most lively conviction, that it is the Spirit of truth, of divine revelation which dwells in the Apostle; we must make the clearly expressed and undoubted fundamental truths a means for the interpretation of his more difficult arguments; we must study the condition of the times in which the Apostle wrote, in order to make ourselves conversant with the outward form of his representation and his human system. But as it is not this but his spiritual system, with which we have principally to deal, we must raise ourselves from the figure to the thing signified, from the particular to the universal and absolute, always keeping in view the one great fundamental truth of the Gospel, that God is love; we must interpret St. Paul, as he interprets the Old Testament Scriptures, adhering to the outward form, and yet comprehending them according to their inward spiritual meaning. We must possess a knowledge of the

methods of inquiry and logical arrangement adopted in our days, apply these to our results, and thus make it as much as possible clear to ourselves, how St. Paul would have expressed his ideas if he were living in our times, and writing for us; by which, however, it is by no means to be implied, that the Apostle actually thought by our methods. If under such conditions, following closely the always consistent thoughts and reasoning of the Apostle, and taking his words in their simplest and most natural significations, we attain to a view of the world more worthy than any other of the God of love, whom the Gospel has revealed to us—if we attain to a wisdom, according to the inspired declaration of the Apostle, immeasurably exceeding all human wisdom, a power of God, the hidden wisdom of God (1 Cor. ii. 5—7)—we may then be certain that we have approached the meaning of the Apostle, and that we have not imputed to him our own ideas, or made him the vehicle for them. Error will appear under the most diversified forms, and cannot be recognised and disposed of without the means which successive times have supplied; but the divine truth is but one, and the path which leads to it but one, and this path is Christ. Thus we shall have to attribute whatever may remain of error to our own weakness; but the truth

which has been vouchsafed to us, can flow from the one source alone, from which the Apostle had drawn such copious draughts.

From this, it will at once appear what object the Author of the following exposition has had in view. From all that has been said, it must be evident that no one can have a more lively conviction than himself, that he has not reached it; but he carries within himself the only incontestable evidence that he has not altogether missed it. What he has here, in the fulness of his heart, laid down as truth, has upheld and strengthened him, and proved a blessing in hope, during a life of manifold and severe trials; and there are not a few of those, whom Providence has placed in close connection with him, to whom his views have proved an equal blessing. That the number of these may yet be increased, is the sole motive which prompted him to publish this work. It is not intended exclusively for any particular class of society, but for all who have the lively desire to see the barrier between faith and knowledge demolished, as much as may be possible in their present condition; who desire to recognise the sublime truths of divine revelation, in unison with the peremptory demands of their reason, and to attain to a oneness of their whole being, without which no lasting peace is to be thought of. Care has been taken to avoid, as much as

possible, whatever might have proved a hindrance to any unprejudiced searcher after truth. But, notwithstanding the most earnest desire for perspicuity, the Author has found it impossible to demonstrate every idea on its first introduction, as absolutely consistent with the whole, since it was not his object to write a system, but to elucidate a work, which he was bound to follow step by step. On this account, it is hoped, the request will not be considered unreasonable, that a judgment upon some particular points, which might startle the reader, may be deferred until they can be reviewed at the close, and appreciated in their connection with the whole.

With respect to the text, the Author has taken special care to translate as literally as possible. But the words as such, have often several significations, and on that account, even with the most earnest desire to translate literally, it is impossible to avoid introducing the results of our Bible studies. For this reason, the several significations in which certain words are used, and of which it was impossible to render all in the text, have been adverted to in the notes, although these are not intended, as will be easily perceived, to supply the place of more copious commentaries for the student, their chief object being, to state the authorities for certain deviations from commonly accepted significations. A

few grammatical observations have also been embodied in the notes, as well as on other subjects, which would have proved interruptions in the text; and care has been taken, that readers who are not conversant with the Greek language, may omit the notes altogether without material disadvantage.

Some other subjects, which are generally disposed of in Introductions, the Author has thought it advisable to treat in the text, as occasion seemed to require it. As it was not his object to communicate or discuss the opinions of other commentators, he refers his readers for such information to their works, chiefly to that of Dr. Tholuck, which is most valuable in many respects, and to which, being the most modern among the more copious commentaries, he has on several occasions made especial reference. It has not been thought expedient to prefix a synopsis of the contents, as this could not have been done without anticipating the Author's results, it being his especial wish, that the reader may ground his views upon the discourse of the Apostle himself, without being influenced by any preconceived notions.

May, then, this work be received by many in the same spirit of love in which it has been written. The Author does not expect universal assent, for reasons which the book itself will

develope; indeed, if such were possible, the very circumstance would be the most powerful refutation of the fundamental principle, which it has been his object to establish.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—7. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called
2 [to be] an Apostle, ordained to the service of
3 the Gospel of God, which He promised afore,
4 through His Prophets, in the Holy Scriptures,
concerning His Son (who was of the seed of
David, according to the flesh, but, according
to the spirit of holiness, has been shown
with power as the Son of God, through the
5 resurrection from the dead) Jesus Christ our
Lord (through whom we have received grace
6 and apostleship to [spread] obedience to the
faith among all nations for His name's sake,
7 among whom are ye also called of Jesus
Christ), to all the beloved of God that are
at Rome, called [to be] Saints: grace be unto
you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

1 ἀφωρισμένος refers to his actual appointment and mission. See Acts xiii. 2. 5 Χάρις denotes the general gift of grace which is the portion of all believers.—ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως the Apostolic office, whose object is, obedience to the Faith, submission through conviction.—ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσι that is to say, all nations as distinguished from the Jews. The expression marks Christianity as the common property of mankind, in opposition to a mere national religion.—ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ the name of

In this deeply significant and comprehensive introduction, St. Paul announces himself as a servant of Christ, in the full assurance of having no desire but that of executing the will of his Master. Nevertheless he certainly feels as one invested with the privileges of a son, admitted to a knowledge of his Lord's designs. He declares himself called, predestined to his office, since, as he afterwards expressly teaches, all things come to pass according to the predisposing will of God, independently of the conceptions or devices of man, thus vindicating the dignity of his office. He regards the Gospel as a dispensation of God, predetermined and promised of old through His Prophets, and the whole scheme of human redemption as purposed and decreed from the beginning, not, as it were, as a new thought or resolve of God. The descent of the Saviour from David according to the flesh, formed a part of this scheme; but that He was a Son of God, according to the spirit, not Himself a being in need of redemption, is proved by the power of God, evinced, according to St. Paul's view, above all other things, by His resurrection from the dead. It is important to observe that St. Paul, in order to exhibit Christ as the Son of God according to

Christ, *i. e.* His power and personality are represented as the object no less than the ground of faith. The glorifying of Christ's name among men is not the first object, but its necessary consequence.

the Spirit, does not advert to the holiness and purity of His life, nor to His divine doctrine and the manifold manifestations of His power, but simply and solely to his resurrection from the dead. That the Apostle considers this as a fact of the highest importance, is clearly proved by the general tenor of his writings, as well as by many particular passages. He says, for instance, that “if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. x. 9); and again, “and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain” (1 Cor. xv. 14). In reference to the proof of Christ’s higher spiritual nature, which St. Paul here draws from His resurrection, it is especially worthy of note, that in his discourse at the Synagogue of Antioch (Acts xiii. 35—37), as St. Peter had done before him (Acts ii. 27—31), he distinctly applies to Christ, the 10th verse of the 16th Psalm, “for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy one to see corruption.” Whether the author of this Psalm may have applied these words to Christ or not, it is evident that they were so applied by St. Paul, and that it was his conviction, that the Son of God, the Spirit who came into the flesh as the Saviour of mankind, who must needs differ from ordinary human

spirits in His manner of entering the world, must likewise differ from them in that of quitting it, and be exempted from this condition of sinfulness.* It is certainly not St. Paul's purpose, to exhibit Christ as the Son of God only after His resurrection†; he represents Him on the contrary throughout, as St. John has done in all his writings, and St. Peter in his first Epistle (i. 20), as Him through whom God had, from the beginning, decreed and executed the work of salvation (Rom. xvi. 25, Eph. i. 4—iii. 9). It is true that St. Paul represents Christ chiefly in the light of a spiritual sovereign, and his manifestation in the flesh is, according to his exalted view, but one period in His work of redemption,

* Of course it is not to be inferred that all who are raised from the dead are spirits of a higher nature; else we must consider Lazarus as such: we may, however, conclude, that a spirit of a higher nature could not be subject to the same process of separation, but according to the higher laws of its being, must leave its body after a different fashion. Lazarus was under the necessity of tasting death a second time, and his body of undergoing corruption. Not so Christ. He was, indeed, under the necessity of leaving behind him his earthly body, of which he had further need after his Resurrection, upon the completion of his visible sojourning on earth—for no earthly body can enter the place of spirits; so that it holds good, even in this sense, that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50). But he did not suffer death again, but departed without death or corruption. This subject will be discussed further on, in reference to St. Paul's doctrine of the *σῶμα πνευματικόν*.

† Ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν means here, not *since*, as Luther and others have translated it, but *through* the resurrection from the dead; a signification of ἐκ by no means unfrequent.

but on that very account, Christ is to him the Son of God both during and after his appearance on this earth. That of all the manifestations of the power of God during the life of Christ, St. Paul should mention only that of His resurrection, is worthy of our especial notice also, because we have here an example of a mode of writing very usual with him, and which has given rise to many erroneous impressions, namely, the substitution of some essential particular or circumstance, as a forcible expression for the whole. Thus the blood or death of Christ often stands for the whole of His life, or the whole of His work—thus circumcision for the Mosaic law or the Jewish nation.

St. Paul particularly insists upon the circumstance of his having received his calling and his apostolic functions through the grace of Christ, and not through any human appointment. He adverts to this also on other occasions, for instance, Gal. i. 1. The object of his mission is to invite all nations to a believing acknowledgment of the name, power, and personality of Christ, to a faithful acceptance of the help offered by Him. He addresses his salutation to all, whom he regards as the beloved of God, whether residents or strangers at Rome, not as though God had distinguished them with a partial or peculiar love, but because He loves all those who acknowledge

and obey Him. He styles them *called*, as being now capable of understanding the call which had gone forth, as the Apostle more fully explains further on; and *Saints*, according to the acceptance of this word in the Old Testament, as having been admitted to fellowship with God's people, and made members of a congregation especially set apart for holiness. *Grace* is that which man, who cannot stand before the righteousness of God, requires, in order to obtain godly consolation, peace, and tranquillity of mind, and these form the object of the Apostle's prayer in this earnest and cordial salutation to the Roman congregation.

8—15. Before all, I thank my God through
Christ Jesus on account of you all, that your
9 faith is celebrated in the whole world. For
God is my witness, whom in my spirit I serve
10 in the Gospel of His Son, that I remember
you without ceasing, and always in my
prayers offer up the petition that by God's
11 will it may sometime be my joy to come to
12 you. For I long much to see you, in order
to communicate spiritual gifts to you for
your strengthening: that is, to be refreshed
13 with you through our common faith, yours
and mine. Now, you should know, brethren,
that I have often purposed to come to you,

but have been hindered hitherto, in order to gather some fruit among you, as also among
14 the other Gentiles. To Greeks and Bar-
15 barians, wise and unwise, I am a debtor, and so it is my earnest wish, as far as in me lies, to preach the Gospel to you also who are at Rome.

The Apostle begins his epistle as he usually does, with the assurance of his love, founded upon

8 *πρῶτον μὲν* "First," means here: Before proceeding to the main subject of the epistle.—*διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* through Jesus Christ, because that for which I thank God, and my being able to thank Him at all are his work; and because it is through Christ alone, that we have access to God.—9 *ἐν τῷ πνεύματι μου*, with my whole soul with my whole being.—10 *δέομαι*, beseech would be too strong a rendering. It is not an unconditional wish, but one subordinated to the divine will, which St. Paul expresses in his prayer, and, as it were, meditates before God.—11 *Χάρισμα*, not any miraculous gift, but comfort, peace, confirmation and deeper insight.—13 The expression *καρπὸν ἔχειν*, to gather fruit (not produce or furnish fruit), is quite in keeping with the Apostle's view, as established in a subsequent passage, viz.—that the efficacy of the doctrine is not dependent upon human will, but can only be manifested in such as have been previously ripened for it by a divine process.—14 *ἔλλησι τε καὶ βαρβάροις, κ. τ. λ.* I am a debtor both to Greeks and Barbarians, to wise and unwise. It does not seem to be St. Paul's design to establish any opposition here, or to place the Romans decidedly in either class. Still less can it be his intention to bring forward their acquaintance with philosophy, as a mark of distinction, since he did not allow its pretensions, even in the case of the Athenians. (Acts xvii.) He feels himself bound, and it is everywhere his earnest endeavour, to labour at his work; but the Gospel does not require any scientific preparation in order to be comprehended, being open to the simplest, nor has it any need to shun the investigation of the philosopher, being above them. Compare v. 16, 17.—Of all the explanations that have been offered of the construction of the sentence 13—15, the best seems to be to take *οὕτω* as equivalent to *quæ quum ita sint, wherefore*, referring it solely to v. 14. Compare Matt. v. 16;

common convictions and common aspirations. It is only where these really exist, that friendship can be lasting, because its foundation cannot be shaken, while all intimacies, based upon a similarity of interests and habits or of predilections for arts and sciences, or having their root in any other earthly soil, will be exposed to the varying influences of life, and even where the outward relations continue, will prove an illusion and deception, like all that is earthly and perishable. St. Paul rejoices to find his bretheren in a fit state for a faithful acceptance of the grace offered them. He, who could with truth say that he judged of all things solely according to their spiritual relations, rejoices in nothing but in his being sure of his beloved in this respect, knowing that to those who seek the kingdom of God, all other things will be added. He gives utterance to his joy in the form of a thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ, as the only way to the Father, who, by the whole work of His redemption has opened to all fallen spirits the way of return to God, to light, life, and truth. He expresses an earnest wish, that it might please God to direct his steps towards them; but even where he has the noblest object in view, he indulges in this wish only in so far as it may har-

Rev. iii. 16; and Plat. Laches. 178.—*οὕτω παρελθόμεν*. See also Herm. ad Viger, p. 933.

monize with the plans of Providence, which he does not presume to scrutinize, sacrificing to them unconditionally his own most ardent desires, and aiming at nothing but to be found a faithful servant of the Gospel. His object in meeting his brethren, is the communication of the spiritual gifts intrusted to him, and the extension of the dominion of truth. He burns with a desire to communicate the truth revealed to him, of which Christ alone is the central sun. But as a ray of the sun is refracted in manifold ways, each, though in different colours, representing the whole image of the sun, and as all the images will have to be collected into one focus, in order to reflect the sun in its purity and whiteness, so will the same truth be reflected in manifold ways in different minds, no one possessing the whole. On that account, St. Paul, though he had surely more to offer than his friends, expects to receive also from them and to be comforted and strengthened through their common faith (xii. 3—7). There is something truly beautiful in this Christian communion or interchange of the innermost conceptions and experiences of spiritual life, and a great blessing does he lack, who is deprived thereof. The convictions of the individual may, it is true, and ought to become so firm and deeply rooted, that even in a world of unbelief and error, he may stand unshaken; and truly admirable is the man,

who, though he imagines himself like Elijah, alone in his belief, keeps his ground notwithstanding. But until this point be reached, the community of our convictions must be accounted a most valuable help; and where it is of the right description, namely, a state of mind produced by purification, reflection and experience, it differs widely from that blind authoritative belief, which is surely never able to send forth into other minds a warming, enlightening, or quickening ray. The Apostle expects an accession of strength to himself also, as a direct consequence of his own communications, and this is the beauty of spiritual communication, that it does not make the giver poorer but richer, since, while he is giving, he will receive from the fountain of light and truth, as it were by reflection, one new ray of light after another. The principal object of the Apostle, however, is to be working at his calling. As minister of the truth, he feels himself bound to communicate, by the very fact of his having something to communicate. As commissioned steward, he must, of necessity, distribute, not for a reward in this world, but because he cannot do otherwise. Woe unto me he says elsewhere, if I do not preach the Gospel. As much as in him lies, and in as far as it depends on himself, God not having otherwise decreed, he is ready to preach the Gospel at Rome also, as he had hitherto

done and is still bound to do, among all men, whether wise or unwise.

16—17. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel (of Christ): for it is a power of God unto salvation to every believer, to the Jews first, and to the Greek. For in Him is the righteousness of God manifest, from faith to faith, as it is written: the righteous shall live by faith.

The Gospel, as St. Paul says in another place, (1 Cor. i. 23), was a stumbling block to many of the Jews, who were in expectation of a powerful, earthly Messiah, and a foolishness, a subject for ridicule, to the Greeks, because they knew not how to reconcile it with their imaginary worldly wisdom. Those, therefore, who were not yet thoroughly imbued with its intrinsic power and truth, might be deterred from preaching it by fear of persecution, or of the opposition and ridicule of such as conceited themselves wise. Not so St. Paul. He knew it to be a power of God, for the salvation of all who are capable of applying it to themselves with living, earnest conviction. He knew it to be the mysterious and hidden wisdom of God, ordained before the world, unto

16 ἐπαισχυνέσθαι, to be ashamed, comprehends also the notion of fearing and drawing back, an instance of which may be seen in 2 Tim i. 8. Μὴ οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῇς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, "Be not therefore *ashamed* of the testimony of our Lord;" which is immediately preceded by οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας. "For God hath not given us the spirit of *fear*."

our glory (1 Cor. ii. 7). To him, therefore, the preaching of the Gospel could not be aught but a duty and a glory. The Gospel is the fountain of grace, in the first place, to the faithful amongst the Jews, not as though it had been principally intended for them—for he says, both here and further on, that it was intended for all nations—but because it had been offered to them first, and because it was a part of God's plan, that it should be first preached in Judea. The Gospel is a power unto salvation, because it reveals the righteousness of God in its essential character and bearing, not only showing wherein it consists, but making it apparent in its effects.—The term righteousness of God (*δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ*), bears a twofold meaning. In the first place, it denotes that righteousness, as a human attribute, which alone is of value before God, acknowledged by Him and required of man, namely that righteousness which proceeds from a faithful acceptance of the help of God, and the childlike reliance upon Him, continually gaining strength within itself, in contradistinction to the righteousness of man, which rests on the observance of certain laws, and which, even if such observance could be perfect, has no power beyond that of exempting from punishment, and cannot lead to the highest bliss or participation in the kingdom of God, being, moreover, but too apt to engender

self-righteousness and hypocrisy (Luke xvi. 15; xviii 11). But this word denotes also justice as an attribute of God, which, as the Gospel teaches, is not, like human justice, to be considered as an exact adaptation of reward and punishment to the doings of man, according to which no human being could stand before God, but on the contrary, as a loving communication of that which man requires, in order to be accepted by Him.—In the same manner the word *faith* (πίστις), so significant in all the writings of St. Paul, will be found to have a twofold meaning; on the one hand, appropriation on the part of man, and on the other, truthfulness and good faith on the part of God. This will appear more clearly as we proceed. Of course in concentrating in a few words the whole substance of his doctrine, St. Paul, in his forcible style, assigns to each word its fullest signification.

The Apostle is full of the great idea, that man is intended by God to become a participator in a spiritual, divine community, in the kingdom of God promised by Christ, which St. Paul himself describes as a state of glory, compared to which the sufferings which we have to endure in order to attain it, are to be considered as nought. And surely, this kingdom of God was before his spiritual eye, when he represents the congregation of Christ under the image of a spiritual

body, which cannot attain to the highest state of life and bliss, unless each member has the positive conviction of his being placed by God precisely in that position in which he himself, together with all others, is best able to contribute to his own and to universal happiness, and consequently to enjoy the highest possible bliss. But at the same time, the fall of man and the sinfulness of the whole human race are also present to his mind; he is fully impressed both with the impossibility of man's being brought by his own strength from this state of sinfulness, in which all participate, to that state of blessedness which necessarily excludes all that is ungodly, and with the necessity of that divine assistance and interference, which have been extended by Christ to the human species. The Gospel is therefore not merely a doctrine and a teaching, but a power of God unto salvation, which, as soon as we become conscious of our own sinfulness and utter helplessness, will beget a childlike and affectionate dependence upon God, that is faith, which will then, through the continuance of the same divine influence, develope itself, and gradually gain strength, and thus lead from faith to faith, from the first dawn to the highest development of faith and so to the highest state of perfection and blessedness. It appears to me, that the force of the expression "from faith to faith," will be

more fully compassed, if we take the first word “faith,” for the truthfulness of God, His persevering and affectionate guidance of mankind, by which man is led to faith, to an acknowledgment and joyful acceptance of the proffered help.—That man can attain salvation through God and through a faithful trust in Him only, and not through his own works, St. Paul continues, was intimated of old, for instance, by the prophet Habakkuk in the words “the righteous shall live by faith,” (chap. ii. 4), where salvation is promised not to him who attempts to fly before a threatening danger, but to him who, in the midst of it, puts his trust in God.

These sublime and to himself most vital truths, the Apostle developes in the following verses in a complete though not exactly systematic manner, with especial reference to the prejudices of his nation. Carried away by the fulness of his thoughts and the depth of his feelings, he sometimes leaves certain necessary restrictions and limitations for future occasions, and sometimes trusts to the reader to draw them out for himself.

If we enter fully into the Apostle's state of mind, we shall find the succession and connection of his ideas very natural. He had said that he was neither ashamed nor afraid to preach the Gospel, knowing it to be a power of God; this

naturally leads him to the consideration of the state of those to whom the Gospel was a stumbling-block and a foolishness, who through their own depravation and perversion of truth, would, as it were, oppose a barrier to the kingdom of God. What avails their impotent resistance against the power of God, and their imaginary wisdom against the might of His truth? Deeply sensible of the utter antagonism that exists between the kingdom of God, for which man is destined, and the unbounded sinfulness which he witnessed both among Jews and Gentiles, he declaims with the wrath and in the fiery language of the Old Testament against them, or rather against their sinfulness; the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness, all ungodliness whether of Jew or Gentile. He does not, however, advert to his contemporaries alone, but proceeds at once to the contemplation of former times and of the nations of the past, for there has been ungodliness from the beginning, and from the beginning has the evil principle been warring against the truth of God. The Apostle contemplates the sinfulness of the whole human race and justifies, as it were, the wrath of God, because, he continues, they have never been without some knowledge of God. From the beginning, as long as there have been men on earth, God has revealed himself to them

through his works, and nevertheless they have fallen into idolatry and sin.

18 For the wrath of God manifests itself from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who oppose the truth in unrighteousness.

It may be hardly necessary to observe, that "wrath of God" signifies the utter displeasure of God, the utter irreconcilability of evil with the nature of God, so that no ebullition of passion is to be thought of. Even the Old Testament, although in its powerful mode of expression attributing to God passions, warns us not to confound them with human passions. Thus we find in Hos. xi. 9, "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger; for I am God and not man;" and in Num. xxiii. 19, "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent;" although on the other hand we read in Gen. vi. 6, "and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." The ungodly, as such, cannot by any possibility participate in the

18 ἀλήθεια means here the truth in its highest sense, the actual, the kingdom of God, as Christ says—"He who is of the truth heareth my voice," John xviii. 37; and—"He abode not in the truth," John viii. 44, &c.

kingdom of God or in real happiness, because there is direct antagonism between them. The displeasure of God against evil, becomes evident—first, by its inherent debasing effects and evil consequences; then by the law which threatens punishment, and still more clearly by the promise of a kingdom of peace and truth, with which it is altogether inconsistent, because it obstructs, as it were, the kingdom of truth in the individual as well as in the whole race, obstructs God's plan of salvation and prevents its consummation. Care must be taken not to suppose St. Paul to be here speaking of the Gentiles of his time or of Gentiles generally as distinguished from Jews, which would altogether destroy his subsequent arguments. He is speaking of the whole human race, which has had the opportunity of witnessing the great works of the Creator from the first beginning.

19—23. For that God may be known is visible
in them; for God has manifested Himself
20 to them: For His invisible attributes have
been visible since the creation of the world
21 through reflection on His works, viz.: His
eternal power and glory, so that they cannot
excuse themselves. But although they knew
God, they honoured Him not as God, and
thanked Him not, but fell into vanity in

22 their conceits, and their senseless heart was
 23 darkened. Giving themselves out for wise,
 they became fools, and transferred the glory
 of the immortal God to representations of
 mortal men, and birds, and four-footed beasts,
 and reptiles.*

That man in his fallen and sinful state has never been without some knowledge of God, and that his alienation from Him has never been such as to leave him in absolute ignorance of Him, the Apostle intimates, is evident from the history of the human race itself. Indeed no people has ever been found so totally degenerate, as not to have some slight notion of a divine Being. If man, who as St. Paul says, is the offspring of

19 "That God may be known," or "a (certain) knowledge of God," for τὸ γινώσκειν means knowledge itself as well as that which may be known. Least of all would I translate, "that which or as much as, men may know of God," for then it would follow, from the sequel, that they could know little or nothing of God from the mere contemplation of nature. For St. Paul is here speaking of the mass of men, not of such individuals as attained to a higher knowledge. The Apostle's meaning seems, therefore, to be merely this, "that men in general have the capability of knowing God, is manifest in them." Much depends on the right understanding of this passage.—20 τὰ ἀόρατα, the invisible, that which is not discernible by the bodily senses.—ἀπὸ κτίσεως, *since and through* (or "*because of*") the creation.—νοούμενα, known by reflection.

* It will not be superfluous to remember, in this place, that the Jews fell into the same kind of perverseness and idolatry, as is here spoken of. Compare Psalm cvi. 19, 20.

God (Acts xvii. 28), could ever have fallen so far from his divine origin, as to have lost every vestige of his high descent, would not the possibility of his recovery be inconceivable? Some spark of knowledge of God has always remained, and this is the only condition for the possibility of return. For the purpose of resuscitating this spark, even in those who had fallen the lowest, God has revealed Himself to them through His works, so far as this was compatible with their condition. Ever since the creation, ever since there have been men on earth, God has offered to their contemplation the universe, as a work of His power and majesty, in order to lead them to the idea of some hidden invisible power, that had produced it. The visible manifestation of such a power was intended and could not fail to lead man to the notion of an invisible power, to God, whom he would thus learn to know, in the first instance only as a most powerful and most majestic Being. It would therefore be out of all reason to acquit man and to throw the blame upon God, as though He had withheld such communications as might have guided his steps to Him. God has at no time left himself without a witness. He has from the very beginning displayed His power and glory throughout the universe; but man had become unable, in the state of darkness to which the fall of man had reduced

him, to form a clear conception of these His first revelations. He felt the existence of a God, an invisibly acting power; but instead of adoring Him, as it appears natural to us that he should have done, and instead of gratefully acknowledging in Him the giver of all the blessings of which he found himself in possession, and instead of giving thanks to Him, he fell into vain conceits. His condition, which the Scripture everywhere describes as the consequence of a fall and of his own act (Rom. v. 12.)—and how could it possibly be otherwise reconciled with a just conception of God?—his condition was such as to make him incapable of receiving the pure light of God's revelation, it was refracted and obscured, by the atmosphere of his impure heart. The ray fell indeed upon the heart but instead of remaining enlightened by the momentary brightness, it closed itself against it, as the eye closes when dazzled by intolerable brilliancy.—The expression "and their foolish heart was darkened," is not to be so misunderstood as if the heart had been pure up to this time and had been obscured only, when this ray of revelation reached it through the works of the creation. Let us remember that the Scripture does not date the fall of man from the time of such revelation but from an earlier period, so that darkness was already within him at that time. St. Paul describes the

facts as they would appear to an attentive observer. Whoever has imparted a truth to another, will consider him in possession of that truth. Now if such a one, incapable of forming a clear conception of the truth, speculates upon it after his fashion with his dim and imperfect faculties (*διαλογίζεται*), and evolves a result differing from and altogether inferior to it, his informant may imagine his faculties and knowledge impaired, while, in reality, the man is the same as he ever was, and has never been in possession of the truth at all. The knowledge might have been received by his understanding and retained by his memory, but it had never become an inward or a living conviction.—The heart of these men, St. Paul continues, was obscured to such a degree, that in their degenerate state they professed themselves wise, and in their vain imaginations, incapable as they were of acknowledging as of God that power whose manifestations they observed, considered it as inherent in the visible world, transferring the worship due to God alone, to that of images of mighty men or even of beasts, whom they found dangerous and desired to propitiate, thus falling into the most senseless idolatry and the vainest superstition.

24—32. Therefore God also gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, so

25 that they dishonoured their own bodies
 among themselves, they who [inasmuch as
 they] changed God's truth into lies, and
 worshipped and honoured the creature in-
 stead of the Creator, who is to be blessed
 26 for ever.—Amen. Therefore [I say], God
 gave them up to shameful lusts, for their
 women changed the natural use for an un-
 27 natural; and likewise the men forsook the
 natural use of the woman, burned in their
 lust for one another, men working shame-
 fulness with men, and received in themselves
 28 the fitting reward of their error. And even
 as they cared not to attain to the knowledge
 29 of God, God gave them up to a worthless
 mind, to do what is unseemly: full of all
 unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness,
 covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder,
 30 strife, guile, malignity: whisperers, back-
 biters, haters of God, overweening, proud,
 31 boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to
 32 parents, unscrupulous, faithless, loveless,
 implacable, unmerciful: who, though they
 know the law of God, that those who do
 such things are worthy of death, neverthe-
 less, not only themselves do them, but have
 pleasure in those who do them.

25 ἀλήθεια τοῦ Θεοῦ evidently denotes "the true God;" as on
 the other hand, ψεῦδος (a lie) stands for "idols," "false gods." But

The leading idea of the above train of argument, which will be more and more recognised as the truth by the intelligent observer, is this:—All essential knowledge attainable by man (not

the thought is more forcibly expressed by the verbal translation —“They have turned the truth of God, the true, actual, spiritual kingdom of God,* the original divine order, into the kingdom of vanity and delusion, of unreality and lies.” Just as ἀλήθεια frequently denotes that which alone is true and real, the kingdom of God; so ψεῦδος denotes the opposite, the kingdom of evil and naught.—παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, *praeter*, “besides,” as it were, passing over the Creator—27 πλάνη, error, transgression, falling away. Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 10. (Septuagint).—28 οὐκ ἐδοκίμασαν τὸν Θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει δοκιμάζειν, to prove, to test the genuineness of anything, and so, to accept and choose as tested. Hence they have not proved, they have not considered the works of God, which are submitted to their contemplation, in order thereby to attain to the knowledge of the true God; they have not searched after God, or they have not thought it worth while, in their brutishness, to attain to a knowledge of God—Both ideas blend into one.—παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν. “He gave them up to a worthless mind.” The Νοῦς (mind) of man is to *prove*; if it either does not or cannot do so, it is no longer genuine and of proof, but good for nothing but to be cast away. It is manifest, however, that the *ground* of its being only to be cast away as ungenuine, is this—that it has lost its power of *proving*, like a touchstone which has lost its properties. Thus in ἀδόκιμος, a word used here by St. Paul, on account of the paronomasia or antithesis in sound, even taking it in its ordinary acceptation, of not genuine, not of proof, rejected (like false coin), there is still another meaning to be brought out, viz.—Incapable of proving, dull. In imitation of the Greek, I have rendered it by worthless, which conveys at the same time the notion of dulness, and inability to prove.

* *i. e.* the kingdom of God, in the sense of God's original creation, before it was deformed by the entrance of evil—what it would have been if those who were created had continued innocent.

that acquired by the understanding alone) stands in the closest relation to, and depends upon his knowledge of God, his own intimate consciousness of God (not his speculations respecting Him). Whoever acknowledges God as the final cause of all existence, will consider Him also as the cause of all the mighty and beneficent workings of nature; whoever does not so consider Him, will, mistaking the visible manifestation of power for the invisible power itself, either not proceed beyond a certain link of the great chain, and so attain only a material conception of the universe, or he will be led into idolatry and superstition by his awe or fear of unknown spiritual influences. Whoever acknowledges God as an all-wise Being, must needs feel that whatever he sees must have been ordained and can have existence for the wisest purposes only; whoever does not acknowledge Him as such, will also fail to recognise the true order of nature; much will appear devoid of purpose, or inconsistent; and he will not acquiesce in a system whose wisdom he ignores. Whoever acknowledges God as a holy and benignant Being, to whom all unrighteousness is repugnant and who can desire only the happiness of all, must needs feel assured that no enjoyment can be in accordance with His will that is attained at the expense of others; he will search after His plan of love

and find his sole gratification in conforming his practice to its rule; he will use the world as not abusing it. Whoever does not acknowledge God as an all-holy and all-merciful Being, and thus remains a stranger to His plans and to His kingdom, will seek only the gratification of his appetites and worldly desires, follow the ruinous devices of his own selfishness, and by misappropriation and abuse of the goods of this world and the neglect of the relative duties of life, work mischief to himself and others. In short, there is the closest connection between total ignorance of God, and total ignorance of moral order—between a perfect knowledge of the true God, and a life in conformity with the divine order. In like manner a defective knowledge of God engenders defective morality and misconception as to the objects of the world. St. Paul represents those of whom he is here speaking, as in a state of the most defective and perverted knowledge of God—in a state of the most frantic superstition. Closely connected, therefore, or in fact identical with such a state, must be a total perversion of the understanding or intellect and of the will, a total misconception as to the value and object of things, as well as a want of moral freedom, manifesting itself by the bondage in which every noble feeling is held, and a slavish subjection to sensual appetites. The Apostle describes as a first consequence of

departing from the order established by God, simultaneous with the defection from God and the turning to idolatry, the perversion of the sexes, and the falling into unnatural and disgusting lust. He then shows how this gross ignorance of God was naturally accompanied by gross ignorance of all that is godly, and how a host of abominations and vices was the consequence, the dreadful catalogue of which he concludes by the most dreadful of all, the pleasure in evil, which betokens a much greater depravity than the doing of evil for the sake of selfish enjoyment. "God," says the Apostle, "gave them over to a worthless mind to do what is unseemly;" that is to say, He permitted that all this evil should develope itself from the poisoned root and become apparent. Not as though God had for ever given them up to the unavoidable consequences of their evil doings. Far from us be a thought so injurious to the love of God. On the contrary, St. Paul preaches the Gospel of salvation even to them that are fallen most low; he shows how all stand in need of this redemption, and how it is prepared for all; neither does the Apostle mean to imply, that God had not at all times concerned himself for men. How would this be possible, since it is through His will, that all are placed in the position which they occupy, a position in which

He would not have placed them, but in order to attain that, which alone is of value in His sight, and which they could at no time have attained but by His help. As He has at all times let His sun shine upon all, so also has His spiritual light shone forth at all times; indeed the one blessing would have been useless without the other; but before man becomes capable of receiving the rays of this spiritual light, he requires a course of training which is also a dispensation of God. Every one has to go through this training, which St. Paul calls the “times of ignorance” (Acts xvii. 30), before he becomes capable of receiving instruction of a higher order. Was it not such a training in the times of ignorance, which brought the Athenians, not indeed to a knowledge, but to a vague idea of the unknown God, of which St. Paul availed himself to bring those amongst them who really cherished this idea, to a knowledge of the true God, thus leading them to that which is godly? Was it not such a preparation which enabled Cornelius and others amongst the Gentiles, to accept the Gospel?—If, as St. Paul further on distinctly teaches, God is also the God of the Gentiles, must not He who is unchangeable have been so at all times?—We should certainly betray a great want of true knowledge of God, if we were to doubt that God had at all times concerned Himself for all men,

or that He had not led them all in the manner most conducive to their own welfare. This would be to doubt either the wisdom or the goodness of God. The very fact of God's having, as St. Paul expresses it, given men over to a worthless mind, so that they received the reward of their iniquities and thus, through most bitter experience, became acquainted with the direful consequences of sin, this very circumstance must be considered as a part of such preparatory training. And how could it be otherwise? God could not have made evil harmless, it being harmful in its very nature; this would have been to change His eternal laws, which is impossible. Suppose He had placed degenerate man where he could not commit sin and had no opportunity for sinning, would he not have remained in the same state of wickedness and not have advanced a single step? It is not what man really accomplishes, that establishes his real worth, his worth in the sight of God, but what he is, what he would do, if tempted with opportunity. Or should God have led men to amendment by another revelation than that which He vouchsafed to bestow on them? What! while with the aid of the revelation given them, they were not even able to gain the first step in the knowledge of God?—The words of Christ, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets,

neither will they be persuaded if one rose from the dead," finds its application also here; if they did not avail themselves of the instruction offered them according to the plans of God, and which was consequently the most appropriate to their state, how much less would they have been capable of understanding and availing themselves of revelations of a higher order! St. Paul certainly, in this place, speaks only of the revelations through the works of the creation, as it is at once evident that these were at all times open to every one, this being sufficient for his argument; but he does not deny, nor could it have been his intention to do so, that other instructions have also been vouchsafed from the beginning. According to Genesis, God himself instructed Adam; and even if we refer this account to an earlier state, not standing in immediate connection with the men of a later date, it is to be recollected, that Noah, who, according to Moses, is to be considered as the parent of all succeeding races, is also represented as having been favoured with direct revelations from God, which were then transmitted to his posterity, as far as they were capable of understanding them. If we really believe in God, who is all-good, and must ever have been so according to the immutability of His being, we cannot but believe also that He must at all times have accorded to all,

such teaching as their spiritual condition required.

In following hitherto the discourse of the Apostle, we have explained the sense of verses 19 to 32, as it will most naturally force itself upon those who, although susceptible of the truth of God, are yet living in this world and subject to its conditions, and as it appears most likely to impress those, who do not feel the necessity of elevating themselves to an objective view in this investigation. It is very natural, that for such St. Paul should represent God as manifesting his displeasure of every individual evil deed, visiting each with its appropriate punishment, and man on the other hand, as if it depended upon his own will to act in one way or another in each individual case. It is obvious that this mode of representation, which the Scripture so generally adopts, is most advantageously employed on account of its clearness and impressiveness, and more particularly as it in no way affects the intrinsic truth of the communication. The objective truth communicated in this manner remains unchanged, it becomes, as it were, translated from the language of spiritual perception into that of the visible world. But in order to comprehend as much as possible the vast idea of the Apostle and to remove apparent contradictions, we must endeavour to follow his objective

view. According to this view, God's abhorrence of evil and its essential contrariety to His nature are absolute, and as through His omniscience the whole heart of man is known to Him from the beginning of his existence, "Thine eyes did see my substance being yet imperfect: and in thy book all my members were written, although as yet there was none of them" (Psa. cxxxix. 16); and when God says: "before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee" (Jer. i. 5); and as God therefore needs not to await the development of man during this life, in order to judge of his intrinsic worth: He will have pleasure or displeasure in man according to his state of purity at the time, and not according to his outward acts. From this absolute knowledge on the part of God, of the intrinsic worth of man, as well as of the relative position in this world in which He has placed him, the necessity of all human acts as they develop themselves in the visible world, must follow as a natural consequence, and St. Paul distinctly teaches (ix. 16) that nothing depends upon the will of man, but all upon the mercy of God; and that man owes the beginning and the end of his salvation to the help of Christ alone. But it is impossible that St. Paul in this place, where he appears to grant to man the

possibility of obtaining a knowledge of God through His works, should advance an argument which he afterwards contradicts. And if we recollect how difficult it was even for the wisest among the Gentiles to attain to the knowledge of the One God, and how difficult for the Jews to retain this knowledge, which had been revealed to them—if we recollect that, even in our days, the most scientific study of nature has not always led to the true knowledge of God, we shall certainly have to admit, that the attainment of the most important of all knowledge, cannot depend upon the will of man, and must require a predisposition and certain state of the mind.—This doctrine certainly militates against the common notions of the freedom of man; it even appears frightful at first sight, but it is not so in reality, as will appear in the sequel; it opens to us the only door to the most cheering and indeed the only consistent insight into the ways of God. When an object of such magnitude is in question, we need not be surprised, that we should find difficulties in our path, neither will they deter those who earnestly seek the truth.

If we recollect that St. Paul in ver. 18, and not without deep reason, speaks of the wrath of God, not as revealing itself against man or his innermost nature, which being of His offspring is unchangeable, and as such cannot have become

hateful to Him (Acts xvii. 28), but against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, which have taken root or dwell in him as some extraneous principle, as the Apostle also says, “ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me ” (vii. 20); and if we further observe, that St. Paul connects the 18th and 19th verses by the particle ($\delta\iota\acute{o}\tau\iota = \delta\iota' \acute{o}, \tau\iota = eo$ *quod*) *because*, thus placing them in the relation of cause and effect, the following will most clearly appear as his meaning:—The absolute irreconcilability of godliness and sin in man is apparent, through men’s inability, in their state of sinfulness, to recognise the true God, to whom alone belong our praise and thanksgivings, while in place of Him they recognised only a dark and fearful power, which in their blindness they sought for amongst the beings of this world, offering thus a superstitious and idolatrous adoration, and all this notwithstanding that the capability of finding the true God was inherent in them (for why else should God have offered them revelations, if they were incapable of receiving them?) and notwithstanding that God had displayed His power and majesty to their contemplation, through the works of His creation, so that they could not charge God with denying them opportunities, but must take the blame upon themselves. This darkened state of the

divine principle within them, which was, as it were, overlaid with an earthly incrustation, and in which they had become incapable of recognising the true God, had likewise rendered them incapable of recognising the laws of His moral order; and they had thus become subject to the most inordinate passions and their baneful consequences. The evil principle within them could not but prove itself baneful in all its effects, not in consequence of a particular dispensation of God, but in consequence of its own inherent nature.

It is thus that St. Paul, without in this instance entering into the causes of the fall, describes the fallen human race as in a state of incapability of possessing a knowledge of the true God and of true morality, and thus prepares his readers, especially by using the words, "God gave them up," for what he afterwards (xi. 32) expresses in the words, "God has concluded them all in unbelief."

However much this description of man's natural sinfulness may offend his pride and imaginary wisdom—and however little he may be able to reconcile the fact of God's having allowed man to proceed thus from the hand of nature, with the attributes which he may assign to Him: it is, nevertheless, most assuredly the teaching of St. Paul and of all Scripture. The

most ancient records begin their account of the development of the human race with the history of its fall, and all the writers of the Old Testament refer to it. David says: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. li. 5); that is to say, when I was born I was already a sinful being. Christ says: "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God;" that is to say, he must put off his old nature and put on a new one, which would not be necessary if his old nature were not ungodly or sinful. And St. Paul says: "By nature we are children of wrath;" "The natural man knows nothing of the spirit of God," etc. etc.

But, fortunately, this doctrine, without which no true conception of Christianity is possible, will be found quite reconcileable with the postulates of a right reason, nay, the latter will even require it; and, as we have already remarked, we shall find this doctrine fully justified on the sequel.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—11. Therefore thou art not to be excused,
O man, whosoever thou art that judgest,
for in that thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, since thou who judgest
2 doest the same thing. Now we know that
God's judgment is according to truth over
3 those who do such things. Thinkest thou
then, O man, who judgest those who do
such things and doest the same, that thou
4 shalt escape the judgment of God? Or
despisest thou the riches of His goodness,
patience, and longsuffering, and considerest
not that God's goodness is leading thee to
5 change of heart? After thy hardness and
thine impenitent heart thou treasurest up for
6 thyself wrath against the day of wrath and
manifestation of the righteous judgment of
God, who will render to every man according
7 to his works; to those who, enduring in the
good work, seek for imperishable honour
8 and glory, eternal life. But to those who are
contentious and disobedient to the truth
and followers of unrighteousness, indigna-

9 tion and wrath! Affliction and anguish
 upon every man that doeth evil, the Jews
 10 first and the Greeks. But glory, honour,
 and peace to every one who worketh that
 which is good, to the Jews first and to the
 11 Greeks! For with God there is no respect
 of person.

Having taught in the foregoing chapter, that all men, without exception, are in a state of sinfulness, and that this state is utterly irreconcilable with God and with happiness, St. Paul now proceeds to show the error of those, who consider themselves exempted from this state, or imagine that as far as they themselves are concerned, sin will not lead to the same unhappy results, no matter whether such error be founded upon a misconception as to their own superiority, upon erroneous deductions of the understanding, or upon religious prejudices. The consequences of this error manifest themselves in the first instance by the very prevalent disposition of

1 κρίνειν (to judge), for κατακρίνειν (to condemn) for it is plain that mere *judgment* of the actions of others cannot be here meant. 7 Δόξα καὶ τιμὴ glory and honour, words so frequently found together, are followed by καὶ ἀφθαρσία (and immortality) instead of an adjective, according to Hebrew usage. 8 τοῖς ἐξ ἐριθείας, properly those who belong to the opposing party, and who therefore resist and oppose the truth and that which is of God. Ἀλήθεια is here again used for that which is of God, the kingdom of truth, and ἀδικία for the contrary.

judging and condemning others, as evincing, on the part of the person so judging, a belief that he is better or more highly favoured by God than other men on account of his own superior worth; it is consequently a misconception of his own condition as well as of the object of our existence upon earth, which is no other than purification and deliverance from sin. Who would condemn others when he knows that he is equally sinful, or is indebted for his present happier condition, not to his own power or merit, but solely to God's help? The Apostle therefore directs his attack, so to speak, against this disposition to condemn others, and, in the first instance, quite generally, as the nature of his subject requires. The universality of the expression, and the use of the second person singular, according to the Apostle's practice, as we shall see more than once in the sequel, when he addresses himself not so much to individuals as to men in general, clearly show that he does not allude to particular modes of judging, or to particular members of the Roman congregation, and also, that he is not, as some have supposed, attacking Heathens and Jews, to whom, indeed, the epistle was not addressed. And this appears more clearly still from the general tenour of the epistle; his object being no other, as we see from the introduction and from many other passages, than that of open-

ing to his Christian and more advanced readers, a deeper and more comprehensive insight into the plan of salvation through Christ, for which he lays the foundation by proving the vanity of old prejudices and the universal need of redemption.*

Therefore, says the Apostle, since the whole of the human race and every individual is by nature in a state of sinfulness, no one can be justified in judging others. He does not maintain that all men and of all times are equally sinful. But even he, who is at this moment further advanced towards perfection, is not indebted for this to his own exertions since all are ungodly by nature; and he is not to pride himself upon that which has been *given* to him, “for what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1. Cor. iv. 7.) And even the man nearest perfection is still impure and cannot stand before God; moreover, the bare fact of his judging others would prove, that he is yet far from God and from charity, this very want of charity being sinfulness, whatever outward form it may take. In judging others, therefore, he is committing sin, no matter whether it

* Those who refer verses 18—32 of the first chapter exclusively to the Gentiles, and the 1st and following verses of the second chapter exclusively to the Jews, not only arbitrarily make “man” in the former passage to signify “Gentile” and in the latter “Jew”; but involves the Apostle in the absurdity of saying that the Jew ought not to judge the Gentile *because* the Gentile is in the highest degree sinful.

be that same outward manifestation of sin which he is condemning, or some other; while he judges others, he condemns himself. We are certain, however, that the judgment of God will be in conformity to the unchangeable laws of His kingdom, which cannot tolerate sin in any shape, howsoever or by whomsoever committed. And this being an incontrovertible truth, how canst thou, thyself a sinful being, imagine that the absolutely true and impartial judgment of God will make an exception in thy favour, and that thy sinfulness, contrarily to the eternal laws of truth, will be unattended by evil consequences? Does not this evince a misconception of the ways and intentions of God, who would lead all by the gentlest means to a consciousness of their sinfulness, to purification, and to happiness? Is it not sheer contempt of the infinite long-suffering, patience and mercy of God, to consider the manifold benefits bestowed upon thee, notwithstanding thy sinfulness, as due to thy merits while thou who, in thy vain conceits, exaltest thyself above thy neighbour, mayest possibly stand so much below him, that the severe trials to which thou seest him exposed, would altogether exasperate and lead thee away from thy true happiness? Dost thou understand so little of the ways of God, as not to know that He would lead thee by the gentlest means possible to that change of heart, which is an

essential condition of happiness? Does not this evince a state of impenetrable obduracy, which, according to the unchangeable laws of God, cannot but lead to misery? Instead of availing thyself of the opportunities, which God in His mercy, has offered thee for throwing off thine imperfections, and of proceeding, thus lightened as it were of a burden, where further opportunities will be granted thee, thou retainest the old burden and wilt have to bend under a double load, when according to the merciful providence of God, thou shouldest have cast off the first; for, with every fault that we lay aside, our load is manifestly lightened. Thou thyself, therefore, art heaping up the evils of which God would rid thee. It is the nature of evil, it is the curse which the judgment of God has pronounced upon it, that it must lead to unhappiness; as it is, on the other hand, the nature of godliness, to be productive of happiness to all eternity. For those, therefore, who are steadfast in the good work and who execute the task of life in the unwearying pursuit of its highest object, there is laid up eternal life, and with it permanent and infinite bliss; for they will have attained a knowledge of God and their Redeemer, which, as Christ says, is life eternal. (John xvii. 3.) Those, on the other hand, who persevere in their defection from the kingdom of God, who, disobedient to the laws of eternal

truth, follow the voice of untruth—be their outward condition and position in this world what it may—will remain in the realm of untruth, and be visited by the consequences of their evil-doing. “Affliction and anguish upon every man that doeth evil, the Jews first and the Greeks. But glory, honour and peace, to every one who worketh that which is good, to the Jew first and to the Greeks! for with God there is no respect of persons.” “In every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”

We will not proceed any further at present with the examination of this passage. After considering the following verses, in which St. Paul continues to represent God as sitting in judgment, we shall see more clearly how we have to understand this method of so representing Him.

In the last verses of the section just explained, and in the verses immediately following, St. Paul combats more particularly a vain and deep-rooted prejudice of the Jews, that of believing themselves, on the sole ground of their descent and of the law which had been vouchsafed to them, as acceptable in the sight of God, thus looking down with pride upon other nations. It is of the greatest importance for the Apostle to shew the futility of this conceit, because there

can be no greater obstacle to a true conception of Christianity, than the belief that God has in a partial manner favoured one nation more than others. Those who had been formerly Jews could not, while any portion of this prejudice remained, have any real conviction of their own necessity of salvation; and neither they, nor those who had been heathens, could possibly have a correct view either of the real object and value of the Jewish religion which they had believed, and were still to believe, a divine dispensation, or of the relation between the Jewish religion and Christianity. St. Paul, therefore, takes pains to shew that the mere outward possession of this religion is of no value in the sight of God, but that the real worth and future destiny of man are independent of all externals, and that in this respect the Jew has no advantage over the Gentile. At the same time he gives important hints for the better understanding of what he had before advanced respecting the natural condition of man, and shews, upon what the judgment of God must alone depend.

12—16. For those who have sinned without law, shall without law be miserable; but those who have sinned under the law shall

- 13 be judged according to the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but those who obey the law will be justified.
- 14 Now if Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature what the law requires, then these who have not the law, are a law to themselves, and show that the essence of the law is written in their hearts, in that their conscience bears them witness, and accordingly their thoughts alternately accuse or excuse
- 16 one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my Gospel, by Jesus Christ.

St. Paul continues to represent God as sitting in judgment, further developing his

12 *ἀνόμως*, without being under the Mosaic law. (Compare 1 Cor. ix. 21.)—*ἀπολοῦνται* shall be unhappy, miserable. It is well known that this is often the meaning of the word. See Ecclus. x. 2, *βασιλεὺς ἀπαίδευτος ἀπολεῖ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ*—an unwise king will bring his people to misery.—13 *δίκαιος*, with respect to the law, means here only undeserving of punishment.—*δικαιωθήσονται*, shall be declared undeserving of punishment, acquitted, as an accused person.—14 *φύσει* by nature, in consequence of their moral standing-point at the time.—15 *τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου*, the object of the law, that which it is designed to effect, and for which it exists; the law according to its intent and essence. In the same manner as the Jew tests his actions by the law, the Gentile tests them by conscience.—*γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν* is more than, ‘written upon stone;’ and denotes, therefore, a higher state of perfection. (Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 3.)—*συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως* in that (or while) their inner voice testifies to them what is right and what is not, and, accordingly, by this voice, their thoughts, etc.—16 *διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Here, too, St. Paul speaks of Christ as of Him to whom the whole guidance and perfecting of the human race is committed.

former declaration, that there is no respect of persons with the impartial Judge. Let us first consider the idea of the Apostle with respect to the imagery he uses, in order to comprehend the construction of the whole passage. Those who have not received the law, will not be judged according to the law; if they have sinned, they will be condemned, but not according to a law to which they are strangers. How could an impartial judge condemn according to a code unknown to the offender? This reasoning contravenes the erroneous notion of many amongst the Jews, who conceived that all the Gentiles would be condemned, because they did not possess, and consequently could not obey, the law. Those, however, who are under the law, will be judged by the law. If they sin against the law they will be punished; if they do not, they will escape its penalties. How could an impartial judge condemn to the same punishment, those who offend against the law, and those who do not? This, again, contravenes the erroneous notion, that the mere possession of the law, the mere belonging to the Jewish nation, would secure favour in the sight of God. Now if the Gentiles, without a positive law, constitute their conscience the arbiter of their actions, and endeavour to live according to its dictates, then will their own conscience stand in the place of the law, during

their life as well as on the day of judgment, when they will be judged according to their conscience, as the Jews will be judged by their law. As the Jew, in so far as he has kept the law, may appeal to this circumstance in order to obtain a milder sentence, so may the Gentile, in so far as he has followed the dictates of his conscience, expect a milder sentence on that account on the day when God through Christ will judge the innermost thoughts of the heart, and when no deception and no vain excuses will avail. In the same manner as St. Paul opposes the Jews who keep the law, to those who do not, he also opposes to each other amongst the Gentiles, those whom their own conscience will condemn, and those whom it will excuse.

In this manner, the whole passage admits of a simple explanation, according to the natural sequence of the ideas, and there is no occasion to consider verses 13 to 15, as a parenthesis. But in thus connecting verses 15 and 16, we are far from following the opinion of those who, in doing so, consider themselves bound to assume, that the Gentiles will be accused, or at least accused in an especial manner, by their conscience on the day of judgment only, when it is consequently too late. St. Paul intends here to oppose, in the most direct manner, the erroneous notion of the Jews, who considered that all

the Gentiles would be condemned, by shewing that the Gentiles have something also, that will plead in their favour on the day of judgment. He speaks only of such as really endeavour to obey the dictates of their conscience; and if he says even of these better Gentiles, that their conscience will not excuse all their thoughts, or all the motives of their actions on that day on which all self-deception will cease, and that in many instances their conscience will appear against them, he does not in fact use stronger language in their case than in that of the Jews, not one of whom, he maintains, could have altogether kept the law, so that no one had a right to claim a total exemption from punishment. If we make St. Paul say, in opposition to the sense of the context, that the conscience of the Gentiles will be roused only on the day of judgment in order to make them acknowledge the justice of their sentences, we should be making him speak in favour of the erroneous notion of the Jews, and disprove what it is his object to maintain, namely, that God is an impartial judge, and no respecter of persons.

We must take care, however, not to draw from the whole of the Apostle's discourse any other conclusions than such as are justified by its object and by the connection. We must not, for instance, suppose it to be St. Paul's

intention to affirm, that the judgment of God will have no other standard than that of the law for the Jews, and of conscience for the Gentiles. It will be easily perceived, that this is not his opinion. As regards the Jews, it is evident that the Apostle, throughout his writings, is very earnest in shewing, that it is not by a literal obedience to the law, that they will secure acceptance with God and eternal happiness, but solely by faith, by the entire disposition of the mind towards godliness. He would consequently be contradicting himself, if he were here to maintain, that the Jew who obeys the law to a certain extent, from a slavish fear of punishment, would be equally acceptable before God with another who obeys the law to the same extent from his innermost convictions, and from real delight in the law of God; or if he were to maintain that the future fate of both would be the same. As regards the Gentile, if the accordance of his actions with the dictates of his conscience were to be the real measure of his worth before God, it would naturally follow that he, whose conscience should be so hardened or so dull as to allow him to commit the most deadly sins without compunction, would have to receive a most favourable judgment; for no one would maintain that conscience is originally alike and perfect in the case of all men, and that it is solely through

their own faults that it is first impaired, as this would contradict our own experience as well as the Scriptures, which depict man in his natural state as a fallen being far removed from godliness, and certainly not gifted with the nicest power of discrimination between good and evil. On the contrary, this gift develops itself in every individual, in proportion as through practice he advances towards godliness; and without the development of this discriminative power, and the conviction, that harmony between the will and knowledge is a condition of his inward peace — without this development or purification of the conscience, no moral advancement is conceivable. And this is also the teaching of the Bible. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, v. 14, we read, “but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Those who without a true knowledge of the real condition of man and the ways of God, yet presume to sit in judgment on them, may well find it irreconcilable with their ideas of God, that He should not have given man power and light to enable him to live according to His will. Yet even such, if only impressed with a feeling that no real and permanent happiness is possible without goodness, must admit that no bad man, however

he may have become so, can possibly be happy in a life freed from all the illusions of the visible world. And St. Paul, with whose opinion we are alone concerned here, declares most distinctly that "as many as have sinned without law, will also perish without law," "affliction and anguish upon every man that doeth evil!" He says only of the better class of Gentiles, that their regulating their actions according to the dictates of their conscience, will be considered a plea in their favour, but by no means that every one will escape punishment or be happy, whom his conscience does not reprove.

But what then is the measure by which the future fate of man will be determined? Manifestly no other than that of their purity and spiritual worth. If, as St. Paul says, the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness (i. 18), that is to say, if sin is utterly and for ever irreconcilable with God and, consequently irreconcilable with happiness, then must the ungodly necessarily remain separated from God, "on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (ii. 5); that is to say, when the irreconcilability of God and evil will become most clearly apparent, affliction and anguish will be his fate. It is evident, therefore, from the nature of evil, no matter what may have been the first cause of its exist-

ence, and however man may consider himself excusable—that he who persists in sin must remain miserable; and therefore St. Paul tells us that whoever has sinned without law, will be miserable, that his not having known the law will not avail him; for it is impossible that God should make those happy who continue to be evil-doers, as this would be subverting His own eternal laws. Obedience to the law, whether written or dictated by conscience, will secure a milder judgment, because even the acknowledgment of the law betokens a somewhat improved condition of the mind. On the other hand, however, happiness and bliss are the sure concomitants of godliness; and as God is all-good and all-holy, so will the godly-minded also be happy, according to the nature of godliness; and so St. Paul promises eternal life and blessedness to those, who persevere in the pursuit of everlasting honour and glory.

What St. Paul here calls the judgment of God is, then, the absolute consequence of evil, inherent in its very nature. We may, therefore, look upon this account of judgment as figurative, and adapted to the conceptive powers of man, and we may say, that the separation of good from evil is continually going on throughout the whole course of life, and not that there is a particular day set apart for the purpose; and we may further

adduce the word of Christ, "He who believeth not is already judged, because he doth not believe,"—that is to say, whoever does not, with the simplicity of a child, confide in God and live in Him, is in a state of unhappiness, from the very fact of his being in a state of estrangement from God—as a proof that this judgment is not to take place at some future time, but has actually taken place. Now if, from this word of Christ, and from what St. Paul says respecting the origin of evil (v. 12, etc.) and its concomitant misery (as a judgment passed thereon), we may draw the conclusion, that man is not proceeding towards a state of misery yet to be prepared for him, but that he is actually encompassed by it, in so far as he is sinful—it is yet equally certain, that man, in his present condition, is so much engrossed by his relations with the visible world, that he cannot at all times have the blessedness of godliness, and the misery of ungodliness present before his mind, so that the evil-doer, although he cannot be really happy, may yet be happy in appearance; and that, absorbed in the pursuit of worldly interests, there are but few who are aware of the judgment already passed on sin; but nevertheless a time will come for every one, when the material veil shall vanish, and all things shall appear in their true light, clear from earthly illusions, to the spiritual eye. This

time when man, according to the design of God, will so contemplate himself and his worldly relations, and when his happiness or unhappiness will stand in direct proportion to his intrinsic worth, is most appropriately compared to a judgment of God. This is more than imagery; it is an intelligible subjective representation of the highest truth.

It follows, however, from all that has been hitherto said, that St. Paul cannot have thought of a Judge who, in strict accordance with their actions in this life, would condemn all men, imperfect and sinful as they would appear before Him, to remain in a certain unchangeable condition; thus making all farther developiment impossible. The idea that God should Himself arrest the progress of good, cannot be reconciled with the knowledge of God, for which we are indebted to the Holy Scriptures. Neither does St. Paul say a word which would warrant such a conclusion; still less does he advert to a so called last judgment, which would separate millions on millions of beings into two classes, without any reference to the degrees of their intrinsic worth, apparent even to all of us, or to their capability for blessedness, in order to award to the one eternal happiness and to the other eternal and unspeakable misery. To this doctrine, derived from the letter which killeth, St. Paul, quickened

as he was by the Spirit, was altogether a stranger, and whoever attributes it to him cannot but misunderstand the whole of his subsequent arguments. It is important, therefore, that not the slightest doubt should remain on this subject before we proceed.

If it should be maintained, in contradiction to what we have stated above, that St. Paul in the 12th and 13th verses teaches, that the Jews are to be judged according to the letter of the law, without any reference to their intrinsic worth or to the motives of their actions, and that their sentence will be either eternal happiness or eternal damnation—it would necessarily follow, that all who were under the law, will without any exception be doomed to eternal damnation, because St. Paul tells us most distinctly, that no one can fulfil the whole of the law, and that no one can be justified by legal performances. But it is impossible that St. Paul could mean this in reference to his own people, the people of God, of whom he always speaks with heartfelt affection, and to all the extraordinary and great men among the Jews; neither could he possibly extol the impartiality of a tribunal that would condemn all without any distinction. And as St. Paul cannot intend to express a higher opinion of the Gentiles in general than of the Jews, and as regarding them he does not go beyond

saying, that their conscience will stand them in place of the law, it would follow that eternal damnation would await all the Gentiles also. Again, then, how could St. Paul extol the impartiality of a tribunal that would condemn all without any distinction!

It is not, therefore, by the success that a man has had in his endeavours to model his actions by that rule of conduct which he has received, that his future fate will be determined, but by his inward state, the motives which have induced him to act. If any proof were required, that this inward state is different in different men, we need only refer to the words of Christ (Matt. v. 21, 22), "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill;" etc. Here we find the same rule differently applied, according to the moral proficiency of the individual; if the new interpretation could have been understood by "them of old time," why should it not have been given them, being so much superior? We may see by the parable of the sower, in which men are likened to ground of different qualities, that the moral capabilities of man vary not only at different times, but in different men of the same time. It follows then, as a natural consequence, that if the intrinsic worth of men before the judgment-seat differs, their sentence and future fate must also differ in degree, and cannot

be eternal happiness on one side, and eternal misery on the other. Suppose, for instance, that of two men to whom the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder," had been given, the one should be capable only of understanding this commandment according to the letter, the other, on the other hand, should be capable of discerning the nobler principle involved, "Thou shalt not be angry with thy brother!" and suppose that both should break the commandment, the one by committing murder, the other under the same exciting circumstances, by harbouring anger against his brother for a moment, and both should become disturbed in spirit in consequence of breaking this law, each according to his interpretation,—can the judgment on both possibly be alike? Who could believe this even for an instant? The one who has harboured anger against his brother may possibly feel more anguish than the murderer, and yet, nay on that very account, he will surely be in a state of much greater purity. Or let us suppose that the one does not commit murder, but is not at all times free from angry feelings against his neighbour, while the other, however much provoked, always preserves his even temper and charitable disposition,—can the state of both after death be possibly the same, when it differed so widely during life? Does Christ in the parable of the ten pieces of money,

mete out the same reward to the two servants, of whom the one had gained ten pounds, the other five? or does He rebuke the servant who brought Him the five, because he had not performed all that was possible? And what should induce us to impute such an erroneous opinion to the Apostle? Does he not, on the contrary, say in the 6th verse of the chapter, that "God will render to every man according to his deeds"? that is to say, that each individual will be happy or miserable in proportion to the purity of his affections, manifested by his deeds, of which God alone will judge? It is very evident, that God would not render to every man according to his deeds, if the fate of very different persons should be alike. The Apostle promises eternal life, that is endless happiness and glory, to such only as by patient continuance in well-doing seek for honour and glory, and consequently, such as have attained the highest degree of purity and godliness, of which man is capable in this world. It is of such that Christ says (Luke xx. 35), "they shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead." On the other hand, the Apostle holds out the highest degree of misery to those only (ver. 8) "who are contentious and disobedient to the truth," and who are consequently in a state of alienation from God. And even for them, be it

observed, he does not speak of eternal misery, but only of misery as an unavoidable consequence. In the 12th verse we find the Apostle speaking of Jews and Gentiles generally, and more particularly of those who are in an intermediate state, between the two extremes. Those amongst the Jews, he says, who keep the law will be exempt from punishment. It is, therefore, exemption from punishment and not the highest bliss, which he promises to such as obey the law, so that it becomes evident that such as keep the law are in an intermediate state; and this corresponds fully with the doctrine of the Apostle, that by the law no man can attain the highest state of perfection, and intimates that after death there will be different degrees of happiness or misery.

The doctrine that those who have not obeyed the law according to their own interpretation, will all be doomed to the same fate, is pernicious, unworthy, and full of contradictions; and this becomes very clear when we consider that in this case man could not be more unprofitably engaged than in striving to attain a more perfect knowledge of the will of God, a deeper insight into, or a more perfect discrimination between, right and wrong, a more sensitive conscience, or a more perfect interpretation of the law, because all such pursuits would expose him to a greater

chance of eternal damnation; for the higher the law, the more difficult the observance. How can such a doctrine be reconciled with St. Paul's teaching, that those only are to attain eternal happiness, who, by patient continuance, seek for immortality?

We arrive, then, at this conclusion: the future state of all men will be in direct proportion to their purity and godliness at the time of their death, without any partiality or reference to outward circumstances, which they were unable to control, and which did not depend upon themselves. The Apostle having established this fact, now proceeds to show, that those among the Gentiles who, by simply following the natural dictates of their conscience, without being bound by any positive law, lead a more blameless life than many among the Jews who do not profit by the guidance established for them—are assuredly in a more godly condition, and will consequently attain a higher degree of happiness. Gentiles of this description prove that the essence of the law, that for which the law was intended, is already written in their hearts; their conscience and their actions are not at variance, they have their criterion within themselves, and there can be no doubt, that such men are more advanced than those who have to receive the law from without.

This important passage at the same time

confirms, in the clearest manner, what we have advanced above, respecting the gradual moral progress of man. According to St. Paul's doctrine, the Gentile may also proceed towards godliness, without possessing what we call revelation in the stricter sense of the word, although, most assuredly, not without divine aid and co-operation, which none can dispense with at any moment of their existence. The Apostle is here speaking of Gentiles who are in a much higher state of morality than that which he had before described as the general, original, or natural state of man, though it is not and could not be his meaning, that the Gentiles, any more than the Jews, might attain the highest degree of godliness and blessedness, without that special means of grace which he preached—yet he allows their preparatory approximation to such a state, and does not denounce eternal damnation on such as have been unable, hitherto, to attain it; but describes their future lot as superior to theirs, who persist in evil doing. Far from underrating or condemning the great men of antiquity, who devoted their best energies to their own moral development and that of their contemporaries, and whose endeavours, under the auspices of Providence, have become and still continue to be a blessing to their descendants, he metes out to them the highest praise for having reached

greater perfection and a higher capability for happiness.

As regards the means of which St. Paul speaks, as necessary for all, both Jews and Gentiles, to attain the highest state of blessedness, it is certain that if it is to be embraced and appropriated by each individual through his own exertions, it must needs be placed within his reach at some time or other; so that such as, according to the divine scheme, have had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with it during this life, must have such opportunity afforded them in some future state, for "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (x. 14). Otherwise God would not be an impartial and all-merciful God. It would be futile to object, that, as God knew beforehand who would accept the Gospel and who would not, there was no necessity for offering it to those who would reject it. There can be no doubt that God knows this beforehand, "In thy book all my members were written when as yet there were none of them." (Ps. cxxxix. 16) But He also knows the future course of every individual life, and needs not await its actual development in order to ascertain, whether a man be fit for blessedness or not, so that He might grant it at once to those who have such fitness, without subjecting them to the troubles of this life, were it not that this life is

in itself a necessary stage in the development of man, in which he is to be purified and rendered capable of higher happiness, all men being sinful and there being “a great gulf fixed” between sin and blessedness. If to those who attain not perfection and happiness, their earthly existence were given only to convince them that they have deserved punishment, and that the judgment of God against them is just—then it would have been doubly requisite, that every possible opportunity for moral advancement should have been afforded to every one, because it might else be justly said, “Had the Gospel revelation been offered me, I might possibly have accepted it.” And who would be bold enough to assert that of all the great and noble characters of antiquity, not one would have accepted the Gospel, if it had been offered to him?

Away then with the doctrine, at once unscriptural and inhuman, of those who would pass so dreadful a judgment upon millions of their fellow-creatures, many of whom may infinitely surpass them in moral and intellectual excellence! Let them recollect, that according to St. Paul’s own words, those who judge others condemn themselves. It is impossible that God should withdraw His fostering care from any germ of good, though still only in the earliest stage of its development. His wisdom and love

will, at the fitting time, bestow fresh soil, new sunshine, and reviving showers, for its further development to perfect beauty.

The Apostle having thus proved the vanity of the Jewish prejudices in respect to their imagined superiority, now proceeds to shew the evil consequences of such illusions.

17—24. If now thou callest thyself a Jew, and
 18 retest thyself upon the law, and boastest
 of God, and knowest the will [of God], and
 canst distinguish, being instructed by the
 19 law; and art confident in thyself as being
 a leader of the blind, a light of those who
 20 are in darkness, an instructor of the unwise,
 a teacher of the ignorant, as one possess-
 ing the embodiment of knowledge and

17 *ἐπονομάζῃ*, callest thyself, with assumption, without being so actually (ii. 28, 29; comp. Rev. ii. 9, and iii. 9). *ἐπαναπαύῃ τῷ νόμῳ*, stayest thyself, reliest upon thy having a law. *καυχᾶσαι ἐν Θεῷ*, boastest of God, as though he belonged peculiarly to thee and to thy people.—18 *δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα*, understandest how to draw fine distinctions between what is permitted and what is not.—19 *ὁδηγός*, a guide, (comp. Matt. xv. 14).—20 *μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως*, believest that thou possessest the *substance* of knowledge, etc. Paul does not by any means employ the expression in a contemptuous sense, but rather declares the Mosaic religion itself to be a mere shadow and outline of the truth: what he blames is this, that the Jews believed that they possessed the substance in what was merely the form, and, contenting themselves with the form of truth, disregarded the truth itself.—22 While thou expressest abhorrence of that which is opposed to holiness (idols), thou violatest holiness itself (comp. Matt. xxi. 12, 13).

- 21 truth in the law; but now teachest others
and not thyself; preachest a man should
22 not steal, and stealest; sayest a man should
not commit adultery, and committest adultery;
abhorrest idols, and violatest that
23 which is holy: thus, while thou boastest
thyself of the law, thou dishonourest God
Himself through transgression of the law.
24 As it is written, “through you is the name
of God blasphemed among the Gentiles.”

St. Paul, addressing the Jews here, expresses in the strongest possible terms what follows as a natural consequence from what goes before. He tells them: If, blinded by your prejudices, you * misunderstand the nature of the law, and lead a life repugnant to the law, you stand below the Gentiles and incur much greater responsibility, you desecrate the holy name of God and commit a most dreadful crime, by representing the very law, upon the possession of which you pride yourselves, as capable of harbouring within its precincts men who tolerate and commit the grossest abominations. It is you, he adds, referring to certain passages of the Old Testament, who blaspheme the name of God among the nations, it is you who disgrace the name of the Lawgiver, whose law, as

* *i.e.* If the Jew, etc.

they infer from your vices, bears such dreadful fruits. Oh! that all who call themselves Christians, and carry the name of Christ, but not His love and mercy, to the heathen, as well as all those who desecrate the name of their divine Master at home, through their life and teaching, oh! that they might all be duly impressed with the deep significance of these words of the Apostle!

25—29. Circumcision is indeed profitable, if thou observest the law; but if thou art a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision
 26 has become uncircumcision. Now if the uncircumcision [the uncircumcised] observe the precepts of the law, shall not his uncir-
 27 cumcision be counted as circumcision? And thus that which by nature is uncircumcision but fulfilleth the law, will judge thee who

25 περιτομή. Circumcision for Judaism, the Mosaic religion. ἀκροβυστία. Uncircumcision for heathenism, the Gentiles. It is highly important to notice this expressive brevity of description, in order to understand similar forcible expressions, which are often misunderstood, *e. g.* “day of judgment,” “high priesthood,” “the blood of Christ,” etc., according to their true spiritual rather than their literal meaning.—27 κρινεῖ, will judge thee, *i. e.*, will shame thee, be found better than thyself. ἐκ φύσεως, according to external circumstance, by birth. In διὰ γράμματος, etc., is implied, while thou art in possession, and mayest therefore use, but neglectest to do so. This interpretation of διὰ with the genitive, is fully justified by Rom. iv. 11; 2 Cor. v. 7 and 10, and other passages. And also *by* law and circumcision. The letter furnishes occasion and pretext to undervalue the spirit of the law.—29 οὗ, refers to “Jew” and “circumcision.”

with the Scripture and circumcision, art a
 28 transgressor of the law. For not he, who
 is one outwardly, is a Jew; nor is that
 which is outward, in the flesh, circumcision;
 29 But he who is a Jew inwardly, and the cir-
 cumcision of the heart, according to the
 Spirit and not according to the letter; whose
 praise is not of men but of God.*

It is most assuredly, says the Apostle, an advantage to belong to a nation, to whom a divine law has been given (he developes this idea further in the beginning of the third chapter), but an advantage only to those who obey the law; whoever does not, separates himself from his nation, rejects the advantages offered him, and thus becomes a Gentile. Now, as the Jew who disobeys the law becomes *essentially* a Gentile, does not the Gentile who lives according to the spirit of the law, thereby become essentially a Jew? Not only will this be the case, but he will stand higher than the Jew, inasmuch as he will do that from the natural impulse of his heart, which the Jew neglected or left undone notwithstanding the law, for names and outward distinctions are as nothing before the Lord, in whose sight moral perfection and purity of heart alone are acceptable!

* Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Col. ii. 11; Phil. iii. 3.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

- 1—20. What advantage then hath the Jew?
Or what is the profit of circumcision?
2 Much in every respect, but this before all
things, that the promises of God were en-
3 trusted to them. For what? if some did not
believe, shall their unbelief disannul the
4 faith of God? God forbid! Rather let
God be [alone counted by us] true, and all
men false; as it is written “that thou
mightest be justified in thy words, and
mightest overcome when thou art judged.”
5 But if it be found that our unrighteousness
brings out God’s righteousness into clearer
light, what shall we say? That God is un-
just if he inflict punishment? (I speak
6 after the manner of men). God forbid!
For how then could God judge the world?
7 For if God’s truth has through my falsehood
been more fully manifested to his glory,
why am I any longer judged as a sinner?
8 Or shall we say (as we be slanderously re-
ported, and as some maintain that we teach),
“Let us do evil that good may come of it”?

though the punishment of such is just.
 9 What then? Have we yet any screen? In
 no wise; for we have before said that all,
 10 Jews as well as Greeks, are under sin. As it
 is written, There is none righteous not even
 11 one; there is none wise; none seeketh God.
 12 All have gone astray, all are together be-
 come unprofitable; there is none that doeth
 13 good, no not one. Their throat is an open
 sepulchre, with their tongue they speak de-
 14 ceit. The poison of asps is under their lips,
 their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood, destruc-
 17 tion and ruin are in their paths, and the
 18 way of peace they know not. There is no
 19 fear of God before their eyes. Now we
 know that whatever the law saith, is spoken
 to those who are under the law; so that
 every mouth must be stopped, and the whole
 world appear guilty before God, because by
 20 the law of works shall no creature be justi-
 fied before Him. For through the law
 cometh the knowledge of sin.

2 *πρῶτον μὲν* means, not "first" but "above all things." So Luke xii. 1, *πρῶτον προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς* and 1 Tim. ii. 1, in both of which passages no "secondly" follows. Moreover the addition of *μὲν* does not justify us in assuming that St. Paul intended to mention several things, but forgot to do so; for even in Rom. i. 8, he has *πρῶτον μὲν* where no "secondly" is to follow.—3 *πίστις*, faith, in the sense in which we say a man of truthfulness and

In the first part of the second chapter, St. Paul had, in order to subvert a dangerous prejudice, made use of some expressions which might be misunderstood as though he would do away with all distinction between Jews and Gentiles. In the 25th verse he had certainly endeavoured to

faith, one who deserves confidence, trustworthy.—4 The *γινέσθω* was probably occasioned by the preceding *μὴ γένοιτο*. Far be the thought! Before adopting such a doctrine, let us rather consider God alone trustworthy and all men in error. *ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαι σε*. St. Paul means doubtless, to say, that if men were able to judge God's ways according to truth, they would always find him in the right.—5 *Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη* God's righteousness, His goodness and faithfulness in the fulfilment of His promises. This follows from the word *ἀλήθεια*, and in a like sense in ver. 7.—6 *ἐπεὶ* denotes here—as it often does at the commencement of a question which expects a negative answer—its relation to that which precedes, and from which the negative follows.—7 *ψεῦσμα* is the opposite of truth and faithfulness, and generally of all godliness.—8 This verse has much perplexed commentators; I know of no satisfactory attempt to elucidate the construction. (See Dr. Tholuck's commentary.) If *μή*, at the beginning of the sentence, has a negative force—in which case we should have expected to find *οὐ*—the verb to be supplied must necessarily stand in the subjunctive; and “why” is certainly not contained in it, and would have to be understood. *ὅτι* can only be the introductory particle, *i. e.*, introducing quoted words, on account of the following conjunctive. I think it the simplest and best way to regard *μή* here as the interrogative particle “*num,*” just like *μή* in ver. 5, (*μὴ ἄδικος ὁ Θεός*) where it cannot mean anything else, and to supply the preceding *ἐροῦμεν* in both places—thus giving the *καὶ* at the beginning of ver. 8 its just value. St. Paul exposes two absurd consequences, resulting from the absurd proposition laid down, in the form of questions, the first of which he sets aside by *μὴ γένοιτο*, and the second by *ὅν* (of whom, *i. e.* of those who really so teach and act) *τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστι*.—9 *προεχόμεθα*, have we (the law) before us, like a shield to cover us? or, does it serve us for an excuse? does it give us any privilege? *προητιασάμεθα* we have before brought in the charge or accusation.

guard against such a misconception, by pointing out some advantages of the Jewish religion, but not only had he made these advantages dependent upon the right understanding and obeying of its laws, as had been before done by several writers in the Old Testament, but he had also added that the outward Jew who does not live according to the dictates of his religion is virtually a Gentile, and that on the other hand, a Gentile may be essentially a Jew without being so outwardly. It was therefore important to show in what the essence of that religion consisted, which he had always revered as holy and of divine origin, and what advantage might be derived by its professors, and, at the same time, to prove not only that these real advantages would not be lost by giving up the prejudice alluded to, but that, on the contrary, if this prejudice were founded in truth, the fundamental truth of the Jewish religion, namely, that God is Lord and impartial Judge of the world, would necessarily fall to the ground. This at once establishes the untenableness of this prejudice, and St. Paul proceeds immediately to the conclusion : since all, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinners and deserving of punishment, and since neither possessing nor obeying the law will justify man before God, all, both Jews and Gentiles, require another

help from above, which the Gospel reveals and offers.

It was, therefore, not the object of the Apostle to enumerate the several merits of the Jewish religion; he confines himself to mentioning the principal one, in which all the others are included, and which at once clearly proves it to form a part of the divine scheme. With this religion are deposited the divine oracles and promises; it contains all that is necessary to attract those who earnestly seek truth, and to further them in their pursuit of godliness. It contains the important revelation respecting the unity of God, the Creator and Lord of all; revelations respecting the origin of man and his fall; laws and rules, by obeying which, man will increase his capability for happiness; and the consolatory promise that through divine grace, the fallen race is to be restored and led to happiness. Who can doubt the infinite advantage of possessing these fundamental truths? Suppose two individuals, in the same state of moral excellence, the one in possession of these truths, the other not, will not the former appear immeasurably favoured? although, according to St. Paul's doctrine, God treats no one with partiality. Is not the one, if he avail himself of it, in possession of a real blessing, which should produce gratitude towards the giver, although

he may not be able to understand why he in particular should be in possession of such a blessing; in the same manner as the better disposed amongst us will gratefully receive and use the blessings bestowed upon them, although they know that they are not indebted to their own merit for their possession, and that an impartial and merciful God cannot withhold a real blessing from any of his creatures. Great, therefore, most undoubtedly is the advantage of the Jew. To him has been vouchsafed what, with diligent use, cannot fail to aid him in spiritual progress.

But now, the Apostle continues, are we to conclude, if God's promises be not verified with respect to all the Jews, if being a Jew do not secure a participation in them, that God's faithfulness is done away? Most assuredly not.

Whatever idea we may form of the nature of such divine instructions or revelations, it is very certain that only those can really receive, that is, appropriate and possess them, who are in a state of purity, enabling them to recognise what is offered, for what it really is. If then God, who alone can judge of the moral condition of man, thought proper to communicate to this people in preference to all others, certain fundamental truths, in a form adapted to their time and circumstances, their nation must have contained individuals capable of availing themselves

of such revelations, as they would else have been of no real value for them; or in other words, God would in reality not have revealed Himself to them. But if this nation contained also such as were incapable of receiving spiritual revelations in a spiritual manner, and who changed truth itself into a lie, would truth on that account cease to be truth? If the divine promises conditionally dependent, as they must be, upon purity of heart and submission to the will of God, are not fulfilled where these conditions are neglected; can this impugn the veracity of God or the certainty of His word? Far from us be such a thought! God is true and faithful to His promises; it is only on the part of man, that untruth and want of faith are to be found. This thought is closely connected with what the Apostle had before said: it is not the outward Jew who is in possession of the truth and of the promises, but he who is inwardly that which the outward symbol betokens. Such only, as St. Paul says further on, are true sons of Abraham.

The fact, then, that the possession of the law does not conduce to justification or the greatest happiness, is perfectly consistent with the truthfulness of God. But to what conclusions would the contrary assumption lead us? If we hold, says the Apostle (as those do, who conceive that God will fulfil His promises to the Jews in spite

of their disobedience to His law), if we hold that our unrighteousness will make the truth of God the more apparent, or in other words, if God in fulfilling His promises in spite of our unrighteousness and disobedience, is to prove His goodness and truth, what shall we say? Shall we say that God is unjust (if we may presume to speak of Him as of a human being), because of His wrath against sin? Far from us be such a thought! But how could God punish sin without being unjust if this assumption were true? For if the truth of God's promises is to be glorified through the sinfulness of men, or to be manifested thereby in a higher degree than by their faith and obedience, how could God judge the sinner, how could He condemn and punish what would contribute to His glory? But as God is just, and yet could not punish sin without being unjust, what should we say? Should we not have to say, "Let us do evil that good may come of it and God may be glorified." Who does not see the extravagance, the criminality of such an argument? Away, then, with a doctrine, which upheaves the fundamental truths of religion and derides the idea of a moral government of the world!

Let us now consider the immediate consequences of this argument. Can the fact of the divine oracles having been entrusted to us, justify

pride or furnish an excuse for persevering in sin? Can we possibly be held guiltless in preference to the Gentiles on account of our possessing the law? Most assuredly not. The reproach of sinfulness is general against both Jews and Gentiles; and the Old Testament, which is addressed to the Jews, contains the very same declarations respecting the universal corruption of man, which St. Paul repeats in the first chapter, so that every one without exception must consider himself as having sinned against God. Now, if both Jews and Gentiles be sinners, and all sin, by whomsoever committed, be altogether at variance with God, it necessarily follows, that the Jew also remains guilty, notwithstanding the law, because, as St. Paul significantly adds, by the law no one can be justified before God, or attain righteousness in His sight. The law has no other object than to convince us of our sinfulness; it has not the power to free us from sin.

It is observable that St. Paul, after having so powerfully combated the prejudice of the Jews as to justification through the *possession* of the law, does not in like manner also combat the other prejudice as to justification through *keeping* the law. I consider this as an additional reason against the assumption, for which there are indeed no grounds, that St. Paul considered

himself in this place as arguing against an obstinate Jew. Such a one, if he had admitted that possessing the law would not suffice, would naturally, and from his point of view consistently enough, object, that obeying the law must suffice, because it cannot be supposed that a just God would have given a law which no one can fulfil, unless the sacrifices commanded, were to be received as an atonement for occasional transgressions. Indeed he might have quoted Leviticus, xviii. 5, "He who keeps my statutes shall live in them," so that there would here be no refutation of a hypocritical pharisee who depended upon works. The former prejudice might be combated by simple reasoning, and required nothing for its refutation but a belief in the *justice* of God; but the doctrine which lies at the root of Christianity, that obedience to the law or works is not sufficient for justification, does not admit of so easy a proof. No one could acknowledge it without being so far advanced as to be impressed with a sense of the *holiness* of God, and of His being in direct opposition to all sinfulness. (Comp. p. 82 ff.) St. Paul had a right to consider his Christian readers as men so far advanced in this respect, that he might propound to them this doctrine, which he afterwards confirms in chap. iv. by the history of Abraham, and several declarations of David,

and more particularly in chap. vii., where he opens to our view a deeper insight into the nature of man and the plan of salvation; this mode of proof being the only one possible, but at the same time accessible to such only as are in a certain stage of moral advancement.

Although, in this place, St. Paul has chiefly the Mosaic law in view, he nevertheless uses the wider expression "law of works," and maintains that no weak mortal in need of help (no flesh) can be justified by the same. By the expression, "law of works," he denotes the law as the outward rule of our actions, the standard by which they must be regulated. This, he says, gives us the knowledge of sin, but not the power of good. (Comp. Gal. iii. 21.) It is obvious that St. Paul, in so far as he here adverts to the Mosaic law, speaks of the whole body of the Mosaic law, and not, as some have supposed, of the ceremonial law alone, because if any part of the law were capable of leading man to perfection, the Jew would require nothing further, and St. Paul would be contradicting himself. But even Moses has set up a law of a higher order than that which awards punishment to the transgressor, and exemption from punishment to the fulfiller of the law, namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" (Deut. vi. 5.) and the

other which follows as a natural consequence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Lev. xix. 18.) Of these rules Christ says, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," (Matt. xxii. 40.) while He reproaches the scribes and pharisees with neglecting the principal part of the law, which is righteousness, mercy and faith. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) And St. Paul also says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." (xiii. 10.)—This proves that St. Paul is in this place opposing the law of works to the law of love. The one commands and forbids actions, with the view of leading degenerate man back to the system of order from which he has deviated, and of making him thereby capable of greater happiness; but the threats and promises of the law cannot regenerate—they cannot change earthly affections into heavenly. As long as this regeneration is not completed, man will continue to be earthly; if he fulfil the dictates of the law ever so much, his obedience will spring from selfishness, fear of punishment or hope of reward, and not from love. Man may, by obedience to the law, attain that righteousness which will secure to him exemption from punishment before his Judge; but the law cannot eradicate the cause of the disease, which is sinfulness, or create purity of heart, which alone is of value in the sight of God, and enables man to

become a member of His kingdom. Not that man, while under the law, is incapable of drawing or being drawn towards godliness. We should else have to suppose that the greatest men of the Old Covenant, had remained altogether earthly, or that the Jews had received the revelations without being at all capable of deriving any benefit from them. Neither does the Old Testament, in the places which St. Paul quotes, aver that the Jews, although all are sinful, were addicted to the abominable vices which are there enumerated. St. Paul had allowed the Gentiles the possibility of an advance towards godliness; why should he deny it to the Jews? But it applies to all, that man is not what he should be; not one is righteous in the sight of God; all are corrupted and become unfit for their high destination. Although St. Paul, referring this passage to the Jews also, speaks of universal sinfulness, and admits degrees in the moral station of these also, we may be sure that even for the most advanced amongst them, he admits only an approximation to the kingdom of God, and not an actual life in it. Were this otherwise, Christ could not have said of him whom he called greater than all the prophets, but who yet, for all his excellence, belonged to the Old Covenant, that the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he; meaning, of

course, those who are actually of His kingdom, and not those who acknowledge His name and doctrine only outwardly. At all events, it was not the law of works from which this law of a higher order proceeded; and it is this which St. Paul intends to point out in this place. And every one who had the faintest idea of this higher law, could not but feel himself incapable of satisfying its requirements. Every outward law is adapted to a certain state, and finds its accomplishment at some time; but the law of love is adapted to all states, and can never be thoroughly accomplished. Christ comprises it in these words: "Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect;" which plainly shews that man may draw towards perfection, but can never reach it. The impossibility of satisfying this last injunction, clearly proves that it is not an observance or work of any kind, but a complete change of the earthly principle into the heavenly, the law of love, and a persevering pursuit of godliness for its own sake, which leads to righteousness before God. This is the patient continuance in well-doing, of which St. Paul speaks in the 7th verse of the second chapter, the perfect and inalienable acquirement of the godly principle. Whoever has undergone this change, will feel himself transplanted, as it were, from an earthly soil into the kingdom of heaven, from death to

life, and will live no more unto himself, but unto the Lord. His own insufficiency will no longer make him doubt; he knows, that the power working within him, is sufficient to overcome all hindrances. But the law of works is unable to produce this righteousness. Another power, a divine light is required, which is Christ. The Gospel, as St. Paul has before said, not only shews us in what righteousness consists; it contains also the power of imparting it. Whatever degree of perfection man may have been able to reach before the appearance of Christ, it was never the law of works that raised him to it, but the redeeming power of Christ, which is the subject of the Gospel. (See 1 Cor. x. 4.)

What has here been said of the law of works is applicable to every law of works and all moral systems, from whatever origin they may be derived. They can furnish no power of performance, still less of regeneration.

21—26. But now hath God's righteousness been revealed without law, to which (righteousness) the law and the prophets have testified; namely, God's righteousness by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all and over all who believe. For there is here no distinction; for all have sinned and fallen short of approbation before God, but are freely justi-

25 fied by His grace, through the redemption
 in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth as
 a Freer from sin, by faith, in His blood;
 whereby He manifesteth His righteousness
 by overlooking sins formerly committed, in
 26 the forbearance of God, in order now to
 manifest His righteousness, that He Himself
 is just and justifieth him that believeth in
 Jesus.

22 διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Why I translate this literally
 "by faith of Jesus Christ," will appear further on.—26 I have ren-
 dered ἱλαστήριον by Freer from sin, (Entsündiger) because the
 word—being a neuter adjective instead of a substantive, and ab-
 stract for concrete—may unquestionably be so taken; and because,
 if St. Paul here makes use of a figure, this is nevertheless its un-
 doubted sense. Thus also προέθετο retains its meaning. He stands
 forth, visible to all, in His blood; (compare Gal. iii. 1.) and ἐν τῷ
 αὐτοῦ αἵματι retains its most simple meaning, and need not be
 changed into εἰς τὸ αἷμα. Διὰ τῆς πίστεως may nevertheless be re-
 ferred to man, because a faithful acceptance must always remain
 a condition of help; but I prefer referring it, in this place, to
 Christ. (See my exposition.) By His faith, sealed with His own
 blood, He stands forth as the Redeemer of mankind. Further-
 more, it is not improbable that St. Paul had in mind the ark of
 the covenant, which the High Priest sprinkled with blood on the
 great day of Atonement, as a type of the Atonement. Of that
 symbol—Christ sprinkled with His own blood is the true antitype.
 The figure is perfectly apposite, and is appropriately introduced
 here, as St. Paul was addressing such as were either Jews origin-
 ally, or had become acquainted with the Jewish religion. To con-
 sider Christ as represented under the figure of a sacrifice, seems
 least of all to the purpose, and in no respect necessary. St. Paul
 certainly makes use of the comparison, (Ephes. v. 2.) but not as a
 figure of the redeeming power which is here spoken of, but of
 self-sacrificing love; just as elsewhere, (Rom. xii. 1.) he beseeches
 his brethren to present themselves a sacrifice to God.

After having thus proved, that all men are by nature under sin, and consequently miserable, and that, in order to attain to righteousness and happiness, all stand in need of a help widely different from the power that is in themselves or in the law, St. Paul now returns to what he had stated in the 16th and 17th verses of the first chapter. The help required by all is offered in Christ, to all who will accept it in faith. That divine righteousness, which is independent of the law, and for which the law and the prophets have prepared us, is now manifested through the help which Christ offers us, and of which we have to avail ourselves through faithful acceptance. All were sinful and consequently unfit for happiness, and all will be justified, not through their own insufficient works or their own merit, but of free grace through the redemption of Christ.

We have now to direct our attention to two points: first, what is here meant by the *righteousness of God*; and secondly, by the *faith of Jesus Christ*.

Let us first consider the words "faith of Jesus Christ," which admit of a twofold interpretation, as we consider faith an attribute of Christ or of man, in the latter case translating it by "faith in Jesus Christ." The word *πίστις*, faith, means truthfulness, dependence, as well as acknowledgment and conviction, and is applied in

the former sense to God, both in the Old and in the New Testament. Now if, in this place, we take *faith* in the latter signification, understanding the words *the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ*, to mean that righteousness as a quality in man, which is acceptable to God, and which man acquires through faith in Christ; then we should be naturally led to ask, what is it that he is to have faith in, and how is he to acquire this faith? If man is to believe, there must be some foundation of fact in which he is to believe. Now this fact is the work of Christ, that which He has accomplished for the salvation of mankind. Even from the circumstance, that the Apostle would otherwise leave this object of faith altogether unnoticed, it appears probable that he means to denote it by the faith of Christ, by that which Christ has fulfilled by His faithfulness and perseverance; and this becomes more probable still, from his adding, that His work will become efficacious only through the acceptance of man. If, on the other hand, the “faith of Christ” were intended to mean *faith in Christ*, Paul would clearly have left unnoticed a subject of the highest importance, and have mentioned the *faith of man* twice, without any reason. And besides, how is man to acquire the belief that Christ has done such great things for his benefit? St. Paul describes man, as by

nature estranged from God, as incapable of understanding and appropriating anything divine, and consequently, this divine fact also. Now, as the work of Christ is to become efficacious through faithful acceptance on the part of man, (and this could not be otherwise, because whoever is incapable of such acceptance would also be incapable of happiness,) is he to acquire this capability for belief through his own power? This is impossible, according to the whole showing of the Apostle. Indeed, it would follow from the opposite conclusion, that man would have himself to accomplish a part of his redemption; and if he could effect this, if he had in his natural state the power of recognising and appropriating the most divine part of his salvation, he would have no need of a Redeemer. Faith, then, the most essential condition of happiness, must be acquired by help from without; and how else than by the help of Christ, since Christ is represented to us as the Author and Finisher of our faith? (Heb. xii. 2; compare Ephes. ii. 8, and Phil. i. 6.)—The whole work of Christ must then necessarily include also His rendering us capable of faith, and the sense of the passage will be this: the righteousness of God is manifested through the faithfulness of Christ, through His unceasing faithful agency. His redeeming power penetrates all men, (gains ground wherever it

has entered and gradually spreads over the whole man,)* it becomes efficacious in all who believe. Whoever believes, believes through the redeeming influence of Christ.†

Let it not be objected that this doctrine would destroy the free will and independent action of the individual and reduce him to a mere instrument. If man, as the Scripture teaches, is of divine origin, no divine influence can possibly reduce him to the level of the machine; and if he were intended for nothing else, it would surely not require such schemes on the part of God to accomplish this end. It is, on the contrary, the object of redemption to emancipate and call into free action the original divine powers of man, which, as St. Paul teaches further on, are fettered by sin; and to the extent that this has been accomplished, has man become faithful. And although redemption is the work solely of the Redeemer, yet it can never take effect without man's co-operation. The powers set free will at once begin to aid His designs. We cannot, without anticipating, treat this subject more fully in this place. It is our object to follow closely the reasoning of the Apostle.

What we have here advanced will pave the way

* εἰς πάντας καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας.

† See what is said further on (viii. 35) on the expression ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ, love of Christ.

for a more perfect understanding of what is meant by divine righteousness, or more correctly the righteousness of God. The term righteousness often denotes that quality in man which renders him acceptable to God, and we need not lose sight of this signification; but it does not convey the full meaning in this passage, and we must not confine ourselves to it. In the 20th verse St. Paul had said, that man is not justified by the law or by works. In this passage he shows us how justification is alone to be attained; namely, through the influence of God, through that which God works for man through Christ. Moses and the prophets have already intimated that God purposed to show His mercy to the whole human race through the sending of the Redeemer; the Gospel teaches that this has now been accomplished, that God has now actually shown Himself in His mercy.*

The Gospel certainly shows us what we ought to be, in order to become acceptable to God, but woe unto us if this were all! It shows us also what God has done for us through Christ, and how He is mercifully conducting us to salvation, while the Old Testament speaks only of His

* Even if *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ* is taken, up to this point, to signify human justice, it cannot be taken so in the 25th and 26th verses. St. Paul says, in the 26th verse, that God manifests himself as *δίκαιος*, thus expressly attributing to Him the quality of *δικαιοσύνη*. He had already done so in the 5th verse, and shown how the *δικαιοσύνη* was *not* manifested; here, on the contrary, he shows how it *is*, and wherein it consists.

justice, as an exact balancing of iniquity and punishment. It shows us that, although we are all sinful and worthless, God will lead us to felicity through the redeeming power of Christ alone, through mercy, without any merit of our own. This attribute of God (His righteousness) presents itself to our view in two ways, first as forbearance, as an overlooking, as it were, of former transgressions—although we should hardly acknowledge this manifestation of it as a proof of His *righteousness*, but rather of His *goodness*, without being able to reconcile it with our ideas of His holiness,—and then, in the person of the Redeemer, as righteousness of a higher order, not only perfectly reconcileable with His holiness, but exalting our ideas of that holiness; so that we can no longer consider God's mercy at variance with His justice; for He does not prepare felicity for the sinner, which would be impossible, but *takes away sin* through the redeeming power of Christ, renders us capable of felicity, and bestows it upon us as soon as we are in a fit state to possess it.

And since at this time, as at all former times, all men without exception, whether more or less sinful, enter this world in a sinful state, every one of us needs this paternal indulgence in respect to former transgressions (committed before we knew of the help prepared for us, and before we were capable of availing ourselves of it) and

we should commit a grave error if we were to confine this period of the indulgence of God to the time before the sojourn of Christ in this world, and not to consider it intended for us also.

But why, we may ask, does St. Paul call this quality of God righteousness, which we should be more disposed to call mercy or love? Because he proceeds from the representations of the Old Testament, where we find the idea of God's severity predominating; and because every representation of different qualities in God must be considered as a concession to human weakness, which will cease when we shall be able to see God as He is, the point towards which St. Paul is conducting us. God, in His essence, has not qualities inherent in human nature, but will in the light of truth appear as all love; for this is the sum of the New Testament, "God is love."

Thus then, as the Apostle teaches, the righteousness of God is manifested, infinitely different from human righteousness. God does not award particular punishments for sins formerly committed, (although they continue to entail evil consequences as long as man remains sinful,) neither does He reject the sinner for ever; He bears with him indulgently and mercifully, and releases him through Christ, from the consequences of his

transgressions. Thus the righteousness of God develops itself to our view in the strongest light, in as much as God, (with whose holiness all ungodliness is irreconcilable, (i. 18.) who cannot consequently unite what cannot exist together, who cannot admit the sinner to His kingdom, or to communion with Himself,) releases him from sin through Christ, and allows him to participate in eternal felicity, when he is thus rendered fit for such blissful participation. Thus the righteousness of God displays itself as truthfulness in the fulfilment of His promises, not by giving what He had promised to those who might boast of having acquired a right to it by keeping the law, for the whole of the law no one can keep, and no one can through his own works attain to that state of godliness which is a condition of the highest happiness. Still less does God fulfil His promises by granting the highest happiness to the Jews on account of their descent from Abraham, notwithstanding their persevering in sin; He fulfils His promises to an inconceivable extent, by eradicating, through the power of Christ, the germ of evil, and thus making us fit to receive what He had vouchsafed to promise.

Indeed, if we consider that evil-doing and happiness are ideas that contradict each other, and cannot, consequently, exist in the same

being; that evil and misery are inseparable, as cause and effect, and essentially one and the same thing, and that the individual will consequently be miserable in the same degree as he is sinful and ungodly, both here and still more in a future spiritual existence, when self-deception and unreal happiness will cease; it will irresistibly follow, that remission of sin, redemption, and blessedness are inconceivable, without a complete annihilation and eradication of evil. And, indeed, the Scripture, although it often touches the subject in a figurative manner, yet always describes redemption as annihilation of evil. The "Blood of Christ," that is, the redeeming power of Christ, "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7.)* "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)† "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins." (1 John iii. 5.)‡ "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the

* καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς.

† πιστός ἐστι καὶ δίκαιος, ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας, καὶ καθάρσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας. St. John here, as St. Paul in this passage, makes the δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ consist in the remission of past sins, and the purification from sinfulness, except that St. Paul, conformably with his object, speaks of all past sins in general, which God will, as it were, pass over (παρεῖναι), while St. John, on the other hand, speaks of those sins which are acknowledged (confessed) and repented of, on which account he uses the stronger expression ἀφεῖναι (to remit).

‡ ἄρῃ.

works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.)* Human forgiveness can be nothing beyond remission of a penalty incurred; and can neither free the transgressor from his tendency to evil, nor prevent his again offending and deserving punishment. Divine forgiveness goes infinitely beyond this; it would else be imperfect, like human forgiveness. It destroys the very germ of evil in man, induces him to a continual pursuit of all that is godly, and secures to him eternal bliss. Such is the fulness of the redemption of Christ! Such the righteousness of God towards the fallen race!

27—31. Where is, then, the boasting? It is done away. By what law? Of works? Nay;
 28 but by the law of faith. For we have seen, that a man is justified by faith, without the
 29 law of works. Or is God the God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles also?
 30 Yea, of the Gentiles also; since it is but one God who justifieth the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.
 31 Do we then invalidate the law through faith? not in the least; we rather, confirm it.

What then, becomes, says St. Paul to the Roman congregation of Jewish origin, what then

* λύση.

28. λογίζομαι, is "I draw the conclusion, inference; I am, certain;" as in Rom. v. 10, 2 Cor x. 7, Heb. xi. 19.

becomes of the preference of which we vainly boasted? Can we still hope to attain salvation through keeping the law, or through a partiality of God for our nation? How completely is the narrow-minded conception we had of God, as if He were exclusively the God of our people, dispelled by the sublime truth of the Gospel, that God embraces with equal love the whole of the human race. He does not require at our hands, what we cannot accomplish; He gives, of His unbounded mercy, to all, without distinction, what is needful; and requires nothing but a faithful, childlike, and pious acceptance of His infinite mercies! How does this insight into the plan of salvation heighten and expand the value and meaning of our own religion also! Have we still to fear that the new doctrine will make it appear useless or foreign to the plans of God, now that we understand the exalted meaning of His promises therein deposited? (iii. 2.)* Is it not the one immutable plan of God, of which we had there only the foundation, but which we now see in its full and glorious development? Are not the promises there made, fulfilled in reality and truth, and in a manner much more consonant with the glory of God, than we were formerly able to imagine? Does faith disannul the law? On the contrary, it is faith which displays the law in all its dignity and glory.

* λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, oracles of God.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—8. What can we then say, that our father
Abraham obtained according to the flesh?
2 For if Abraham was justified on account of
his works, he hath whereof to boast, but not
3 with God. For what saith the Scripture?
Abraham believed God, and this was counted
4 to him for righteousness. Now to a work-
man his wages are not reckoned as a matter
5 of grace, but as a debt. But to him, on the
contrary, not as a worker, but a believer in
Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is
6 counted for righteousness. Even as David
also pronounceth the man blessed, to whom
God imputeth righteousness without works.
7 “Blessed are they whose transgressions are
8 forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed
is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not
his sins.”

5. τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ. But to him not as a worker. These words would certainly appear at first sight to be of general application, like the preceding τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ. The reason of my, notwithstanding, referring them, (with Schott and others,) to Abraham, will appear from my exposition. I merely observe in this place, that our so taking them is not precluded, either by the

The truth at which we have arrived, a truth so highly important for a true conception of Christianity, that man cannot by works or observances, attain that state for which he has been destined by God; and that blessedness is not to be acquired through his own merit, but can be attained only through a faithful acceptance, as a gift of God, altogether independent of the law and of the circumcision: this truth St. Paul proceeds to confirm by the example, so highly important to all Jews, of Abraham, the father of their nation, and the spiritual father and example of all that believe. Can we, says the Apostle, if we examine the story of Abraham with attention, can we say that he obtained acceptance in the sight of God, and, in consequence, the promises, according to the fashion of the flesh, in the manner of one man's acquiring a possession from another? The expression, *according to the flesh*, as opposed to the term *spiritually*, denotes a mind and deeds grown in an earthly soil, deeds which amongst men will be considered meritorious, in contradistinction to a mind of love,

μη, (comp. 2 Cor. v. 21, and 2 Cor. vi. 6, where μη refers to particular persons,) or by the present λογίζεσθαι, used in animated discourse for the aorist. Thus, then, τῷ δέ, μη ἐργαζομένῳ κ. τ. λ. But to him, Abraham, in the case before us, not works, but faith, was counted for righteousness. Those, however, who prefer translating—"To one that worketh not, but believeth," etc., must, if they coincide with the reasons hereinafter set forth, supply, "and such a one was Abraham," and then it becomes essentially the same.

bringing forth deeds to which he will no more be able to ascribe any merit. If Abraham was righteous in his worldly relations, (we need not use the word in its narrower meaning; if he was kind-hearted, benevolent, noble-minded,) this would procure him acknowledgment in the eyes of man, he would be esteemed and praised as righteous and noble-minded, and enjoy all the advantages that accompany a well-founded reputation, but righteousness or acceptance with God he could never attain *on that account*. For what is there in such works deserving praise or reward at the hand of God? May they not even proceed from worldly motives, and have no other object than worldly advantage, the result of worldly maxims, which would entitle them to nothing but worldly acknowledgment, however well deserved? Integrity, for instance, even if founded upon the best moral principles and free from selfishness, cannot, considered as an outward deed, be a reason for acceptance with God, because the opportunities for its display do not depend upon the will of man, but upon outward circumstances furnished by Providence; it can be acceptable to God only inasmuch as it proceeds from a true, godly, and loving principle, or in other words, inasmuch as it proceeds from faith. If this were otherwise, God would love that man most who had the best opportunities for manifest-

ing his good intentions by deeds, although such opportunities do not, evidently, depend upon him, but upon God who appointed him the place which he occupies. (Comp. Mark xii. 43.) St. Paul refers to the express testimony of Scripture, which does not speak of any work of Abraham's as earning God's approbation, but simply states that "Abraham believed God, and this was counted to him for righteousness." But faith, considered as a principle, is intention or will, not works; and even the expression, "it was counted to him for righteousness" (*ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην*), proves that the Apostle speaks only of the will, of intentions, and decidedly not of works done. So that even where no opportunity had been afforded him for evincing his will by outward works, what he would have done if such opportunity had been afforded, was counted to him by God, who looks only to the inward motions of the soul. Abraham believed God; he attended to the voice of God within him, and knew how to distinguish it from the voice of the world and of his own passions; and it is this bent of his mind, this walking before the Lord, which secured him acceptance. This faith was not a holding of certain things for true without convincing reasons, which, indeed, could be of no account before the God of truth; it was an intimate and lively acknowledgment of the divine principle, which in its intensity and

immediateness required no further proof from without; it was a conscious living in the spiritual world. Such a faith is an abiding but growing state of the mind, widely differing from a momentary exaltation, inciting to marvellous deeds. The promise which Abraham had received, that a son should be born to him in his old age, remained without fulfilment many years, and yet his faith never wavered. Nay, when in later years the severest trial of his faith came upon him, we find him preparing himself for the act, not in an excited state of mind, but calmly and with imperturbable fortitude. It need hardly be observed, that this trial was imposed upon him not, as the ancient Record expresses it in the poetical language of its time, to make God sure of his faith, but to make Abraham himself more sure, and to furnish a glorious example to posterity. And it is only the fact of his executing the divine command with the firm conviction that it was the voice of God which spake to him, and that the plans of God, which reach far beyond the grave and far beyond all time, are to be revered by the faithful worshipper, whether understood or not—it is only this fact which constitutes the act of Abraham such a glorious example of faith. Had not this conviction been living within him, it would not have been pious but fanatical.

The Apostle adds a remark in this place, which puts it beyond a doubt, that the words which he had quoted from Scripture, "Abraham believed God, and this was counted to him for righteousness," are to be referred to his state of mind, not to his actual deed. He says "to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;" consequently, if Abraham had earned, as wages, what was granted to him, this could not have been looked upon as a grace bestowed. But he receives no recompense for a deed performed; for we know of no deed of his on this occasion, we hear only of his faith, and are told that this faith was pleasing to God, and counted to him for righteousness.*

* We must accordingly refer the 5th verse to Abraham, and not consider it as intended, in this place, for a precept of universal application, though it is virtually such notwithstanding. It belongs necessarily to the establishment of St. Paul's arguments: if it were only the enunciation of a general precept it would be a mere repetition of what was before said, and which should here be confirmed by an example, that of Abraham. The objection that the definition "who justifieth the ungodly," which is added to the words "one that believeth in Him," (*πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ*) cannot refer to Abraham, because in the act of faith which St. Paul mentions, his faith in the justifying grace of God, is not at all in question, seems to me to be of no weight. The Apostle is speaking, as we have seen, not of any single act of faith on the part of the patriarch, but of the frame of his mind. This frame of mind, this faith, was of the right sort, since it was pleasing in God's sight, though it could not embrace in itself the divine counsels, which could only receive their historical development after the lapse of ages. But notwithstanding this apparent doctrinal imperfection in the faith of Abraham, it could not but contain the conviction of his own sinfulness, and that a deliver-

It is certainly to be considered as a divine grace, and not as a reward due to Abraham, that the disposition of his mind or his faith, although it could not be perfect, should have been counted to him as perfect, humanly speaking. Abraham was by nature a weak, sinful man, like all others, but at the time the story introduces him to us, he had already made considerable progress towards purity of heart and faith, (and this surely through the previous help of God, without which this would have been impossible,) but he had not reached perfection; for then he would not have needed the command of God, to walk before Him and be perfect. It was a grace therefore, that his as yet imperfect faith was counted perfect. It should not be said that Abraham received the promises as a reward for his faith; for, "who hath first given to Him, that it should be recompensed to him again?" Even the promise was a grace in accordance with the

ance could only take place through divine assistance, (for had he been proud and self-righteous he could not possibly have pleased God,) and so it must likewise have contained faith in Him who justifieth the sinner. And if possessed of such a faith, he could tranquilly leave the way and manner of such assistance to the wisdom and love of God, and the more unconditionally he did so, the more perfect was his heart. It is true that our own faith, now that we know Christ, must also, to be a right one, involve the conviction, that the divine assistance has been extended to us through Christ. Abraham's faith neither involved nor needed such a conviction, for, as it was, it wrought all that a true faith can work—justification before God.

divine love, which gives to each man what he is in a fit state to receive. Abraham's faith, therefore, was not counted for perfect in the sense of God's counting him as perfect, and, at the same time, leaving his imperfections upon him. This would be impossible, according to what I have before stated; and should not be lost sight of, on account of what follows further on. It is the nature of redeeming grace to send forth its vivifying rays to every germ of godliness in man, for its development and perfection. For this reason, he in whom much divine seed has already taken root, will visibly develop himself more, "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance."

It is evident that David also had the firm conviction that blessedness was to be attained only by divine grace, and not by human merit; for he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." He cannot certainly mean by this covering of sin, a concealing or cloaking of sins committed, while the sinful disposition still remains. He speaks both of forgiving and covering, in order to remind us of the divine manner of forgiving, which, as St. Paul has taught us, consists in a complete eradication of sinfulness, upon which a complete forgetting and covering of the past must follow, an

extermination of sin and all its consequences, as if they had never existed.

After this digression, St. Paul returns to his subject, to show, by the example of Abraham, that justification, or the entering of man into the proper childlike relation to God, is altogether independent of circumcision and law.

9—17. Now, does this declaration of blessedness apply to the circumcised or to the uncircumcised? We say, indeed, that faith was counted to Abraham for righteousness.

10 But how was it counted to him? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision?

11 Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness [justification] of faith, which he had in uncircumcision, in order that he might be the father of all that believe in uncircumcision, (so that righte-

12 ousness might also be counted to them,) and the father of the circumcision, of those who are not only in circumcision, but also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while he was in uncircum-

13 cision. For, not through the law was the promise made to Abraham or his seed, that he should inherit glory, but through the

14 righteousness of faith. For if they who

are of the law are inheritors, faith is made
 15 void, and the promise disannulled: for
 the law worketh wrath: but where there is
 16 no law there is no transgression. Therefore
 (it was) through faith, so that it might be
 of grace, in order that the promise might
 stand sure to all the seed; not only to that
 which is of the law, but also to that which
 is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father
 17 of us all (as it is written, "I have made thee
 a father of many nations,") before God in
 whom he believed, who quickeneth the dead,
 and nameth that which is not, as if it were.

12. The expression *καὶ πατέρα περιτομῆς, τοῖς οὐκ ἐκ περιτομῆς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς στοιχοῦσι. κ. τ. λ.* can only mean, father of those among the circumcised who, at the same time, believe, for that Abraham should be father of the uncircumcised who believe, has been said just before. It is clearly as a *spiritual* father that Abraham is here spoken of, and to refer this to *all* the circumcised would be at variance with chap. ii. 28, 29.—13 *κληρονόμον κόσμου—κόσμος* denotes, as is well known, first, order, harmony, decoration, honour etc. (It is used for personal adorning in 1 Pet. iii. 3, Isa. xlix. 18, lxi. 10, Eccclus. xxxii. 6, compare 1 Tim. ii. 9,) and so, the *world*, in so far as it is the expression of the supreme disposing Spirit. It is no where promised that Abraham or his posterity should be inheritors of the *world*. St. Paul probably had in mind Gen. xv. 7, where the possession of Canaan is promised to Abraham. Canaan was frequently employed as a type of Heaven, of the dwelling of the blessed, a participation in which is vouchsafed to those who have *δικαιοσύνην τῆς πίστεως*. Now it is not impossible that such types were rendered by the Apostles in other words, for the purpose of showing that they were not to be taken literally. And thus St. Paul, who obviously takes the promise in its spiritual sense, referring it to the uncircumcised spiritual posterity of Abraham, seems designedly and significantly to employ *κόσμος* to denote the most perfect order and harmony, the dwelling of love and peace. *Ἦ* must be

The Apostle now proves, by a simple and cogent argument, from the example of Abraham, that the declaration of blessedness pronounced by David upon those who have received forgiveness, is not to be confined to the circumcised, but extended to all who resemble Abraham in faith. Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness while he was yet uncircumcised, which proves that faith may be counted for righteousness to the uncircumcised. Abraham received circumcision as a symbol of deep significance. To the spiritually-minded St. Paul, everything was full of spiritual meaning--nor, indeed, can any divine institution fail of being so. Circumcision of the flesh betokens circumcision of the heart, as St. Paul had before intimated, (ii. 28.) it is an outward sign of an inward transformation; and so to

similarly understood in Matt. v. 5.—15 Why I take the second γάρ as=δέ, but, on the other hand, will be seen by my exposition. For this use of γάρ see Hermann ad Vig. p. 846. Some manuscripts, indeed, read δέ.—16 The sense of the words παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, is unmistakeable, for it can be no other than that which is given in the 12th verse. But the construction also is easy, if we understand with πίστεως the explanation in the 12th verse, τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, which St. Paul seems to have had in mind. The promise remains sure for *all* his posterity that believe, not only the Jews, but also those, who under the same outward circumstances as Abraham, that is without being circumcised, believe.—17 κατέναντι οὗ ἐπίστευσε Θεοῦ=κατέναντι τοῦ Θεοῦ, ᾧ ἐπίστευσε is an attraction of precisely the same kind as in Acts xxi. 16, παρ' ᾧ ξενισθῶμεν Μνάσωνι τινι. I have preferred the literal translation of this verse because it seems to give the sense with the greatest beauty.

Abraham it was not only a confirmation of God's promise, but a warning that he required further purification, and, that with him and his descendants, the fulfilling of the promise was to depend upon purity of heart. In this sense Abraham is called an example and a father of all the faithful, without distinction of times, nations, and usages. All who believe in God, like the uncircumcised Abraham, are to rejoice in His helping, cleansing, and redeeming mercy; they will find acceptance with Him, and blessedness as they advance in purity of heart.

Many who suppose St. Paul to be arguing with obstinate Jews, have regarded the 13th verse as an additional argument, that God's pardoning mercy is not confined to the Jews, and therefore explain it thus: Neither was the promise given to Abraham and his descendants by the law, (under the law, or on account of his fulfilling the law,) etc. But if St. Paul intended to refute those who considered the mere possession of the law sufficient, in which case "they which are of the law, (*οἱ ἐκ νόμου*)" in the 14th verse, would mean "those who *possess* the law," they would not admit that the promise is annulled or abrogated, since they do not make the promise contingent upon faith but upon the possession of the outward law. If, on the other hand, St. Paul intended to refute those who make

the promise contingent upon the *fulfilling of the law*, so that “they which are of the law” would mean “those who found their claim upon works”: the words “faith is made void,” would not tell against them any more than against the former, since they do not ascribe any efficacy to faith. The words which follow, “the promise is disannulled,” because no man can fulfil the law, (see p. 136) might embarrass but would not refute them. Moreover the words “for where there is no law, there is no transgression,” would, in that case, be quite superfluous, and lead to the false conclusion that St. Paul was conceding to the Gentiles an advantage over the Jews, on account of their not having the law; which would be a contradiction of what he had before advanced, namely, that all men are by nature in a state which cannot find favour in the sight of God, for it is immaterial whether the inward state of an individual, which alone God regards, become apparent by the breaking of a positive law or not, as God would know beforehand whether he would break the law or not if it were given him.

The simplest way, then, of understanding the passage, seems to be this. The Apostle had stated that all depends upon faith, and not upon works and observances, and now confirms this by adding, that God has not made the fulfilment of His promises dependent upon the

keeping of the law. The promise to Abraham and his descendants, he says, was not that they should be heirs through the fulfilling of the law, but through the righteousness of faith.* For if they who fulfil the law obtain what was promised, then faith, which was the sole cause and condition of the promise, will become void, and the whole promise also will be void and of no effect, since no one can keep the law, which

* This is historical. The first words of the Lord to Abraham that we have recorded, (Gen. xii. 1.) are an injunction to go into a land which God would show him, and in which He would bless him; not so much, therefore, a commandment as a proof of God's goodness. The following promises are all unconditional, but the faithful and pious disposition of Abraham shines throughout; he follows the call of God; he preaches the name of the Lord; he builds Him altars; he is liberal to the priest of the Most High God; and generous to his conquered enemy. Even the more definite promise, (ver. 15.) is made unconditionally. The historian assigns as a reason, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. To the repeated and more abundant promises, (chap. xvii.) it is added, "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore," namely, circumcision; but this is, as St. Paul expressly says, a seal of righteousness, and therefore, not a condition. Further on, God is represented as saying to Himself (xviii. 19), "Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and through him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; for I know that he will command his sons and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and right, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He hath promised him." And when the promise was renewed in the most solemn manner, after the great proof of faith which he gave on the occasion of the command to offer up Isaac, it was added, "Through thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." Thus fulfilment of the law is now here made the condition of the fulfilment of the promise, which is a free gift, though only to be possessed by those who embrace it in faith.

only worketh wrath. But if, on the other hand, the obtaining of what was promised depends upon the faith of the individual, upon his confiding disposition towards God, and not upon the law, then there is no impediment to its fulfilment, because faith has no law, and therefore there can be no transgression of the law. So then the fulfilment of the promise depends solely upon faith, because it is not a debt but a free grace, and thus the promise will stand for every real descendant of Abraham, for every true believer without distinction of nations. It is in this sense that Abraham is the father of all the faithful; in this sense he is called the father of many nations. He is accounted the father not of the Jews only, but of all who shall be faithful in their time, by Him in whom he believed, before whom everything lives, even future generations, aye, even what we call dead; (Luke xx. 38,) who even quickeneth the dead, and before whom even that has being, which we consider as not existing because it has not yet entered into the visible world; who rules the invisible world also, and who knows the spirits which shall enter only at some future time into the visible world, and calls them as it were by name.*

* This rendering of *καλεῖν* appears to me to express more than "calling into existence," a meaning which is involved as well. God knows the spirits of men before they enter upon their human existence, and disposes their destinies and vocation accordingly. (Psa. cxxxix. 16; Jer. i. 5.)

18—22. Beyond hope he believed with hope, that he should become the father of many nations, (according to the declaration: "So
19 shall thy seed be!") and, not wavering in faith, he considered not his body already dead, as he was near one hundred years old,
20 nor the deadness of Sarah's womb, nor did he, through unbelief doubt the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving God
21 the glory, and firmly persuaded that what He hath promised He is also able to perform.
22 And therefore it was counted to him for righteousness.

St. Paul here shews by an example the greatness of Abraham's faith—the mighty effect of his confidence in God. Not as though the faith which Abraham displayed on this particular occasion had been the cause of God's approbation; the promise was a consequence of his faithful attachment to God, as his confidence in God was also the effect and proof of his firm attachment. A mind less dependent upon God, less convinced of the love, wisdom and power of God, would have looked with doubt upon the

18 *παρ' ἐλπίδα*. I have rendered this by "over and above," "beyond"—"more than," (comp. Luke xiii. 2.) because "against" might be connected with the notion of opposition and impossibility. What was promised to him lay beyond his hope, was even more than he was justified in expecting according to the ordinary course of things. But it was not *against* his hope, opposed to it, nor impossible.

promise. It far exceeded his hopes. Considering his advanced age, and the age and barrenness of Sarah, he must have long given up all hope of offspring. Nevertheless he joyfully embraced the promise, disregarding all that might make it improbable in the common order of things; his firm conviction of the truthfulness and omnipotence of God carried him far beyond the specious calculations of reason. He gave God the glory. To him, true believer as he was, nothing could appear impossible which accorded with the goodness of God, and which did not stand opposed to what he knew of the divine character. This faith, this state of his mind was counted to him for righteousness.

23—25. Yet it was not recorded on his account
24 alone that it was counted to him, but also
on our account, to whom also it will be
counted, (namely,) to us who believe in Him
who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,
25 who was delivered up for our transgressions,
and raised for our justification.

But, continues the Apostle, not only as an historical fact in honour of Abraham, have these communications been made to us, but also for our instruction and consolation. To all of us who believe in God as Abraham did, shall faith

be counted for righteousness. We may all like him be assured of God's mercy, of our own advancement in goodness, and the fulfilment of the great promises which have been made to us. Our faith, if it be in reality a firm reliance upon God, must be of the same description as Abraham's; but our assurance of His love, and our insight into His plans for our salvation may be more perfect, and must necessarily be so if the state of our mind equal his. Abraham recognised God as the quickener of the dead, before whom there is no distinction between the present and the future, and believed in Him; but the plan of His infinite mercy, the redemption of the human race through Christ, he could not know, and consequently could not make part of his faith. To us this plan has been revealed; we know that the Lord of Glory, in His boundless love, left the habitations of eternal light, and took upon Himself the conditions of humanity and death, that He descended into the abyss to loosen the bonds of the fallen, because no other way of redemption was possible—we know that He rose from the dead and lives in the world of spirits and of truth, released from the bonds of matter, to accomplish His great work of the justification and salvation of the fallen. For although the work of His redemption is but one, and, viewed from the divine standing-point, com-

plete; yet, viewed from our own standing-point, it is still in progress. We all, though sure of our redemption, feel ourselves bound by the trammels of sin; and other generations both of the present and future time, are and will be in the same condition. For us and for all these, redeeming and justifying mercy continues in operation. If our faith be like that of Abraham, we cannot fail to accept and gratefully avail ourselves of this revelation in its divine simplicity and truth. Abraham never opposed sceptical doubts to the promise which was made to him, neither can we oppose them to this greater revelation, for it contains nothing in contradiction to the most pure and sublime conception of God; it is, on the contrary, the demonstration and visible manifestation of the sublimest love. If we have faith like Abraham we shall feel as he did, that to the divine love nothing is impossible, and that in our frail condition we may faintly conceive and reverence, but can never fully comprehend the plans of such love, and that it would be insane presumption for man in his imperfect state, hourly exposed to numberless errors, to consider himself competent to understand and criticise the plans of the All-wise.

This renders it perfectly intelligible what that faith is, considered as a quality in man, which

St. Paul requires of those to whom he preaches the Gospel in its purity, or rather of which he says that it will be counted to us for righteousness as in the case of Abraham, and which is consequently the indispensable condition of our attaining the proffered help. It is that confidence in God, that pure consciousness of God, from which the full and sincere acknowledgment and appropriation of the divine aid proceed, and must necessarily proceed when we have received the tidings of it, pure and unadulterated. It is that state of mind in which the knowledge of Christ, when He has been revealed to us as He is, and the knowledge of God, are one and the same thing, (John xiv. 7,) because Christ is the visible manifestation of God in this world, and is One with the Father. So, then, faith is a state of the mind, not a historical knowledge, still less a thoughtless acknowledgment of articles and creeds of human devising. Abraham knew nothing of a historical Christ, and yet his faith was counted to him for righteousness; those to whom St. Paul preached the Gospel knew nothing of articles of faith or synods, and yet he tells them, that their faith will be counted to them as that of Abraham had been counted to him. Abraham knew how to distinguish in his heart the voice of God from other voices, and thus a true Abraham's faith will require the re-

jection of all human doctrine which does not approve itself to our hearts as divine, because such true faith is irreconcilable with the blind faith of authority and fear. Abraham believed without any prescribed creeds or form of religious worship, and yet his faith was counted to him for righteousness. And even so our own faith, if we believe in Christ as Abraham would have believed had Christ been revealed to him, will be counted to us for righteousness, notwithstanding differences in the outward forms of religion. According to the plans of God, the historical Christ could not be revealed to Abraham, and yet his faith was the right one for him and acceptable to God. Whence then, the dreadful delusion, that those to whom, according to the plans of God, Christ could not be revealed even after His appearance on earth, should be for ever rejected by God although believing in Him, and honestly availing themselves of the means at their disposal for attaining godliness: since St. Paul shews by the example of the uncircumcised and unbaptized Abraham, that the uncircumcised and unbaptized may be acceptable with Him, who is the God of the heathen as well as of Jews and Christians; St. Peter tells us that with God there is no respect of persons, and that every one who feareth God and doeth right is pleasing in His sight; Christ says that He is not come

to judge the world, but to seek and to save the lost. How dare we condemn those who do not believe in Christ according to certain forms with which they have had no means of becoming acquainted: when Abraham was acceptable to God without any such form, and when Christ has prescribed no such form, and did not Himself condemn the rich young man, whom He instructed, for being as yet incapable of acknowledging Him aright, but *loved him* because he endeavoured to attain godliness in the best way that he knew, and it is impossible that He should renounce for ever him whom He *loves*? (Mark x.21.) Whence is this bigot faith, this passing of judgment so repeatedly and solemnly forbidden? Can he seriously consider himself to possess the true faith which is to be counted for righteousness, who thus bids defiance to the express teaching and example of his divine Master? And can mere forms or dead works, of which it is expressly taught that they were not what rendered Abraham acceptable with God, supply the place of the true faith which He requires?

St. Paul, who nowhere preaches eternal condemnation, but, on the contrary, warns us so positively against condemning others, does not pass sentence even upon those who so woefully misunderstand him and his Master; but he certainly does not consider them to have that faith which

shall be counted for righteousness. To such, the just but merciful Judge will appoint the place which they are competent to fill according to their intrinsic worth, which is known only to Himself. But perfection or justification in its highest sense, will be the lot of those only who really believe in the God of love, who willeth that all should receive His help, and who will succour all in a manner far beyond our comprehension, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—11. Therefore being justified by faith we
have peace with God through our Lord
2 Jesus Christ; through whom we have also
been led in faith to this grace, wherein we
stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of
3 God. And not only this, but we rejoice also
in tribulation, knowing well, that tribulation,
4 worketh patience, and patience proof, and
5 proof hope, and hope maketh not ashamed:
for the love of God is poured out into our
hearts through the Holy Spirit which is
6 given to us. For when we were yet power-
less, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
7 Yet hardly doth any one die for a just man;
though perchance for his benefactor some
8 one might venture to die. But God mani-
festeth His love to us in that while we were
9 yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more
then shall we now, being justified by His
10 blood be saved by Him from wrath. For if
while we were enemies we were reconciled to
God by the death of His Son, much more
shall we, having been reconciled, be saved by

11 His life. And not only this, but we also triumph in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now obtained our reconciliation.

The Apostle now shows, in few but wonderfully pregnant words, the infinite gain that accrues to us from a justification and redemption, which, independent of works and of the law, rests solely upon faith, and for which we are indebted, in its beginning, progress and completion, to the help of Jesus Christ alone. At the

2 That *προσαγωγή* does not here denote free access to God, a trustful communion with God as the culminating point of *εἰρήνη* (peace), but rather, according to its literal and ordinary acceptance, a leading towards, an approaching, and that it refers to the following *χάριν*, is decisively shewn by the 6th verse, the purpose of which is to proclaim, that we owe to Christ the first beginning of our salvation, and which would otherwise stand quite unconnected with what precedes, and almost without meaning. The whole passage (6—11) is clearly intended as proof of the foregoing verses (1—5).—7 *γάρ*—*γάρ*. The first *γάρ* does not refer to any corroborative proposition; it means, therefore, “indeed,” “yet,” and should be followed by *δὲ* or *ἀλλὰ*, instead of which we have a second *γάρ*, as in iv. 15. The signification of *ἀγαθός* and *δίκαιος* in this passage, which has occupied commentators so much, can no longer admit of doubt, after what Dr. Tholuck has said on the subject in his Commentary, (comp. Matt. xx. 1—16,) where the householder promises to pay the labourers whatsoever is right (*ὃ ἐὰν ᾖ δίκαιον*.) Towards those, therefore, to whom he paid the customary wages he was *δίκαιος*; but towards those whom he gave more than they were entitled to ask, he shows himself bountiful and beneficent, *ἀγαθός*. (ver. 15).—11 *καυχώμενοι* is emphatically co-ordinate with *καταλλαγέντες*. (Winer’s Gram. i. 143.) We are not only reconciled, and as such no longer fear punishment, but more, we are triumphant, joyfully hoping in God for the highest blessedness.

same time he prepares us for the deeper view of God's scheme of universal redemption, which he displays in the subsequent verses.

Through this justification by faith, then, we have peace with God, which was not attainable in any other way. Faith places us in our proper relation to God, and consequently to all creation. The antagonism between our will and that of God ceases; and although the remaining elements of our earthly nature continue to hinder us from recognising His will at all times and under all circumstances, and from leading a life in perfect harmony with it, yet all *intentional* opposition will have ceased. Our failings from weakness will no longer disturb our peace with God, or prevent our joyous looking up to Him, since we have the firmest conviction that our salvation does not depend upon particular observances, or upon the keeping of a positive law, but solely upon faith, upon the direction of the whole of our desires towards Him, and since we know that His faith, His veracity in the fulfilment of His promises, infinitely surpasses all that we can imagine, for all that we have is owing to His grace. Through Jesus Christ alone, the sole appointed Redeemer of the world, we have obtained that peace which we now enjoy, not that we had so far helped ourselves through our own strength previously, as to have

become susceptible of it. No! We owe all to Him, the first direction of our mind, the first step towards the grace wherein we stand, the very beginning of our faith. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. This conviction of the help begun and continued by Him, assures us that it will be fully carried out, for it is impossible that He should leave His divine work unfinished. In joyous hope we exult in Him, who has promised us a participation in a state of glory and blessedness far surpassing all human powers of conception. Nor do we exult only in moments of excitement and foretaste of the promised bliss, but at all times, even in moments of tribulation and anguish; knowing that our redemption, although spiritually or in God's sight accomplished, yet temporally is still accomplishing. We know, that although the divine principle has obtained the mastery within us through the grace of Christ, the sinfulness that still cleaves to us is not to be at once destroyed by the fiat of the Almighty, but must gradually disappear by our purification in this life, to the end that by a practical knowledge of the disastrous consequences of all alienation from the supreme divine order, we may be imbued with a holy abhorrence of all ungodliness, and so may with our own consent be released from it thoroughly and for ever. Thus we become

impressed with the divine object of our life in this world, and of the trials which we have to undergo; and this insight as yet imperfect but completed by faith, makes us joyful even in sufferings, convinced that under divine guidance they must needs lead to happiness. Our patience and endurance must be ripened by the tribulations of this life. For how could these qualities, so indispensable for the enjoyment of lasting happiness, be acquired until we have learned that impatience and inconstancy render us unfit for the blessings within our reach or in prospect? And how could our faith increase and become unconditional submission to the will of God, did we not learn by experience that what we call misfortunes will eventually prove a real blessing, and lead the way to godliness? Thus patience will bring forth settled conviction and constancy in all the vicissitudes of life; thus by practice we shall more and more recognise the voice of God, and acquire that firmness of the will and energy for action, without which there can be no felicity, but which must remain imperfect until we feel that our will fully coincides with that of God. With such persevering constancy, the brightest hope will go hand in hand, hope which maketh not ashamed, because nothing can withstand the will of God, and consequently our own will, if it be in harmony with His. Pene-

trated with His love, which will have taken possession of our heart, we shall know that His will is universal blessedness, and that it knows no obstruction or limits. Thus, through the Holy Spirit which is poured out into our hearts, we shall in hope enjoy the blessedness of perfection.

This glorious conviction so confidently expressed by the Apostle, is to be traced to the fact which he had before insisted upon, that we are indebted for our salvation, even in its first beginning, to the help of Christ alone. For if we, who, as St. Paul so distinctly teaches, are all by nature under the dominion of sin, and in a state of alienation from God, had been able to raise ourselves by our own strength to a certain degree of acceptableness in the sight of God, and had had to do this before God's mercy could work upon us through Christ, then there would be no reason for supposing that the same strength which enabled us to make the first and naturally most difficult steps, would not have been sufficient also for the remainder. And we should be without consolation for those who are as yet living in the depths of guilt and misery, and of whom we could not know whether their own strength would be sufficient to fit them for receiving the grace of Christ, so that Christ would not be the Redeemer of all. St. Paul,

therefore, again adverts to the truth he had before enunciated in order to develop and confirm it still further. From Christ, he had before said, the beginning of our salvation has proceeded, and to Him we are also indebted for its progress and accomplishment. For, he continues, Christ has died for us, has manifested upon us the effect of His redeeming power, not when we had acquired a certain degree of rectitude and acceptableness with God, but when we were as yet altogether powerless for good, and alienated from God, nay, enemies of God. How great beyond all human conception does the love of Christ here evince itself? While scarcely any one would sacrifice his life for a righteous person, and while dying for a friend or benefactor is the greatest sacrifice that man has ever accomplished, we see that Christ died for the ungodly, for enemies! This is the proof which God has given of His love, that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. How firm then must our conviction be, that we have no longer to fear the wrath of God, or its unavoidable consequences! Christ, who began our salvation and died for us, He lives for us to complete it. And not only will He save us, but lead us on to eternal blessedness. Therefore we rejoice in God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Having now considered this important passage

as a whole, it will be necessary to revert to some parts in particular.

The expression used in the 6th verse: Christ died in due time (*κατὰ καιρόν*) for the powerless, is not to be referred to the time of His bodily death, but to the condition of those for whom He died. This is evident from the position of the words, but chiefly from the whole context. St. Paul had here no occasion whatever to call attention to the fact of Christ having died in this world at the proper time, or at the time appointed by God; the remark would have been simply unnecessary. His object was to make it apparent that Christ brought His help to those who were yet without strength, and not to those who had the strength to help themselves; that He had not merely completed the happiness of such as were already to some extent restored to a friendly relationship towards God, or who had never fallen from it, but that His redemption had begun while they were in the greatest depths of misery. For this reason he adds: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, His death reconciled us with God while we were yet His enemies.

But who are they to whom Christ extended His helping hand? for whom He died while they were yet enemies? Clearly not only those who, as sinners and enemies of God, were living at the time of His death; as it would, in that case,

have to be supposed, that those who were at that time His friends, the disciples of Christ, and many others, who, although not His immediate followers certainly cannot be called enemies of God, did not require His help, or, that it was withheld from them, though better than those to whom it was extended. And, in that case, the death of Christ would have been no blessing to those who lived before, or to those who were to live after His death, while yet, according to the positive and oft-repeated testimony of Scripture, the redemption is a blessing for *all men*, because all who ever have lived or ever will live on earth, need the help of Christ, and receive it.

Thus it becomes apparent, *first*, that the *death of Christ* does not here mean His bodily death.* If in order to establish this more clearly, we return to the example of Abraham, it is evident that he could not be called an enemy to God at the time of Christ's death, as he had been called His friend long before. Now if Christ died for Abraham also, (and this cannot be otherwise, since He died for all men,) the death of Christ must signify something beyond His

* Let me not be misunderstood, as though I designed to raise a doubt of the necessity and deep significance of Christ's bodily death; more will be said further on (viii. 3.) on the subject, on this deepest of all mysteries. The point to which I would here draw attention is this, that by the expression "death of Christ" much more is to be understood than His bodily death.

bodily death. And that this is really the case, and what it signifies is easily seen, if we recollect that the sacred writers, and more particularly St. Paul, often understand by the word death, that which is opposed to the true and perfect spiritual life in and with God. Now the Bible represents Christ as Him who, before the creation of the visible world, was most intimately united with the Father, (John xvii. 5.) and who, in His boundless love of the fallen race, left the regions of eternal glory and bliss, and took upon Himself what was altogether inconsistent with His own divine nature. Now if even we ourselves justly call the death of a pious person an entrance into life, how much more justly may the entrance of the purest of all spirits into the visible world, in spiritual language be called death? What is death, even the most painful and ignominious, leading as it does to life, compared with the relinquishing of the most blissful existence, for an entrance into the world of sin!*

It is not the death of the Redeemer in this world, it is His entrance into the world of sin, which constitutes His immeasurable sacrifice. — The death of Christ, therefore, signifies the whole

* St. Paul, as is well known, frequently employs the expression "death," to denote the transition from one state to another totally different. The sinful man is dead to righteousness, the truly baptised is dead to sin. Now, if we think of Christ, first as intrinsically one with the Father, as all holiness, and light,

of His redeeming agency in and for the material world ; and thus it becomes conceivable that this agency was necessary, and extended to all human beings, both before and after His time. For it did not begin with the visible appearance of Christ as the son of Mary, which even the strictest adherers to the letter will not maintain to have been a less necessary portion of His work of redemption than His death. The human life of Christ was certainly, for us, the most visible part of His work of redemption, and of this, again, His death was the most prominent and momentous part; and is chosen on that account to express, in the terse and forcible language of the Bible, the whole of His redeeming work; just as the blood of Christ is used to denote the means of purification for all. Christ's work of redemption is not confined to or comprised in His human life only, but as, according to St. Paul's express declaration, in His life after the resurrection, (iv. 24.) so also, in His life before the incarnation. He, who says of Himself, "before Abraham was, I am;" of whom St. John

and as Himself knowing no sin ; (2. Cor. v. 21.) and then, as stripping Himself, as it were, of His Godhead, (holiness before which the sinful world could not stand,) as making Himself acquainted and concerning himself with sin, in order to redeem the fallen, we find an obvious contrast of conditions which justifies the expression, notwithstanding that no real contrast is conceivable between Christ and God, as in the case of sinful men, since he has ever been intrinsically one with the Father.

says, "He came unto His own;" (John i. 11.) who is represented as working from the very beginning; to whom the Father had surrendered all things, from the first, and not only from the time when He took upon Himself the shape of man; He must needs have been at all times working for His own. As long as men, and therefore sinners, have existed upon earth, He could not but be working against sin and evil, against that which is a hindrance to happiness; He must needs, from the very beginning, have been working as our Redeemer. He worked for our salvation before His entrance into the world. "He was the spiritual rock that followed them." (1 Cor. x. 4.) As during His life on earth, and after His resurrection, so will He work until all enemies shall be put under His feet, subdued by His infinite love; and He will then surrender the kingdom to His Father, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 25, 28.)

How infinitely more exalted and in accordance with the whole tenour of the Scripture, and more worthy of the God of love, is this view of the death or rather the world-redeeming life of the Saviour of mankind, than theirs who, misled by isolated, figurative, though, it is true, deeply significant expressions in which the voluntary submission of Christ is compared to a sacrifice, consider themselves bound to look upon the

death of Christ as the means of propitiating an offended Deity; or theirs who consider the death of Christ necessary in order to satisfy the justice of God, while such an idea of justice, founded upon human relations, pre-supposes a mutuality of obligations, and is in no way applicable to God; and while St. Paul teaches, (iii. 21—26.) that the righteousness of God consists in His *taking away sin*, and rendering the sinner capable of blessedness. Let us remember that even the Old Testament tells us: “I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger.” (Hos. xi. 9.) “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, and not that he should return from his ways and live?” (Ezek. xviii. 23.) Let us remember also that Christ teaches us to know God as the Father of all men, as the Fountain of love, and that He does not tell His disciples that His death was necessary for them in order to propitiate God, but that He was going to prepare a place for them, (John xiv. 2, 3.) and that, in fact, we nowhere read of a reconciliation of God to man, but only of a reconciliation or conversion (*καταλλαγή*) of man to God.

As St. Paul expressly tells us that Christ died, that is to say that He had begun His redeeming work for men who were yet sinners and enemies of God; and as His redemption was necessary for *all men*, without reference to

the time of their life in this world, and consequently necessary also for Abraham and all others who like him were not enemies but friends of God during their life—it follows *secondly*, that every man, even he who like Jacob was born a favourite of God, must at some time have lived as His enemy. Unexpected and strained as this conclusion may appear to many, it is, nevertheless, irresistible and in full accordance with St. Paul's doctrine respecting the universal sinfulness of man, and we shall find further confirmation of it as we proceed. It is only by the most consistent reasoning, and by keeping the lode-star of truth steadily in view, that we may hope to arrive at saving knowledge.—*Lastly*, since the blessing of the redemption begins for every individual while he is in the state of the greatest alienation from God, and as St. Paul tells us, this very fact is the greatest proof of God's love for us, it follows, that all who are saved through the redemption of Christ, have been at all times under the influence of divine grace. Thus, from the very first, God's dealings with men have been mercy unceasingly, as indeed they could not fail to be, consistently with His immutable nature. The grace in which St. Paul says, in the second verse of this chapter, that we now stand, is therefore not a new state in respect to God, but solely in respect to man, who as soon

as the divine principle has taken possession of his heart, and has gained an ascendancy over his originally degenerated nature, will, in consequence of this very change, have been fitted to receive and apprehend the influence of divine grace in a manner up to that time unknown to him. As the rays of the sun are poured on the barren rock as well as on the fruitful soil, but manifest their influence upon the seed there deposited in widely different ways, not in consequence of a difference in the rays but in the capacity of the soil for receiving their influence, so also are the spiritual rays of God's mercy the same for all; but their efficacy must necessarily vary according to the condition of the minds of men. Upon some, the divine grace will only have a preparatory influence, while upon others its effects will be quickening and beatifying.

Having thus displayed to our view the immeasurable love of God, who does not await any incipient development of man through his own strength, but begins this development through His own free grace; and having prepared us for a deeper insight into the mysteries of His world-redeeming mercy, the Apostle now proceeds.

- 12 As then by one man sin came into the world,
so by sin [came] death: and so death passed
upon all men, because all have sinned.

- 13 For until the law [*i. e.*, even before the law]
 sin was in the world. But sin is not reckoned
 14 where there is no law: yet death reigned
 from Adam to Moses, even over those who
 had not sinned in the same fashion of trans-
 gression as Adam, who is a type of what
 was to come.

After shewing that the redeeming mercy of Christ had been extended to all men, while yet in a state of the greatest sinfulness and degeneracy, it remained for the Apostle to prove that every one has been at some time in such a state.

12 I must intreat my readers to examine the whole of this most difficult and important passage without prejudice, and not to take it for granted, that St. Paul designed nothing more than to draw a parallel between Adam and Christ, but forgot what he wished to say while writing, and did not return to it till further on (ver. 18), and that the expression, "Adam was the figure of what was to come," means simply that Adam was "the figure of Christ," etc. The second half of the chapter, beginning at the 12th verse, stands obviously in the closest relation to the first; but I cannot, therefore, allow that it *follows* from it, *διὰ τοῦτο* thus signifying, "it follows from this." For what had St. Paul said? That we owe our salvation to justification by faith in Christ; that God, even when we were in the deepest misery of sin, had given us the highest evidence of His love through the mediation of Christ. Is it then a necessary *consequence* from this, that by one man sin and death came into the world, or even, (supposing St. Paul to assume this as known,) that Christ is the sole cause of the extermination of sin? This does not *follow* as a consequence from what has been said, but is the same thing in other words. I therefore take *διὰ τοῦτο* as a particle of transition and connection by which the Apostle would express, "what has been said leads us to remark," etc.—*καὶ διὰ, κ. τ. λ.* I take with Erasmus and Beza, as *introducing* the con-

He goes back, therefore, to the most ancient Records, to the fall and to the origin of sin. This most difficult of all problems, the origin of evil in a world created by God, the All-good, in which all must have borne a resemblance to its Author, and consequently must have been good; this problem, which as yet no system of philosophy has been able to solve satisfactorily, could certainly not be explained metaphysically to the human race in its infancy. Nevertheless, the human race needed one admonition on this subject, namely, that evil took its origin in a wilful defection of the created beings from the order established by God; and that thus,

sequent proposition to *ᾧσπερ*. This is not open to any grammatical objection, and is required by the context, unless we arbitrarily assume St. Paul to have changed the construction. The favourite parallel between Adam and Christ will not accord with this simple mode of taking it, but this makes it still more evident that St. Paul was not as yet thinking of such a parallel. Moreover, the words *δι' ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου* retain their full meaning according to this interpretation, as will be seen further on. A further comparison of my interpretation of the whole passage with earlier ones, according to the results to which they lead, I must leave to my readers.—*ἐφ' ᾧ*, which generally denotes the condition under which anything happens, has been rightly rendered by Luther and all modern commentators by *because*. But should it be referred by any one, with the older commentators to *ἀνθρώπου*, in spite of the distance between them, it cannot grammatically be rendered by *in whom*, but *on account of whom*, or *with whom*, or *after whose example*, either of which renderings suits my interpretation which follows. But the construction as well as the sense require *because*, and this is confirmed by 2 Cor. v. 4, and Phil. iii. 12.—14 *τοῦ μέλλοντος*, Erasmus, Chr. Schmidt and others, have taken this as neuter.

through their own fault, and not God's, they fell into a state of disorder, sinfulness and misery, from which, not having been able even to maintain themselves in their original state of bliss, they were certainly unable to extricate themselves by their own strength, and without the aid of God. The importance of this fundamental truth must be apparent to every one, who has seriously reflected upon man's nature and aspirations, in the light of his own experience. Without it no true religion, no true philosophy is conceivable, as must be apparent to all who are penetrated by this truth, but certainly to them alone. And yet no man will in his fallen state attain to this truth by his own strength; he will, on the contrary, resist it if offered him, because pride, one of the consequences of the fall, will naturally prevent his taking upon himself the cause of the evil which he finds encompassing him, and the existence of which he cannot deny. —This fundamental truth has been imparted to man in a symbolical form, the only one fit for the human race in its infancy, intelligible even to a child, and yet in perfect accordance with the reality symbolised. The circumstance of our being in possession of this truth, if truth it be, proves it to be a communication from above, since if man be a fallen being, as it represents him to be, the fall must have made it impossible

for him to discover it by himself. The ancient Record states that man, originally created by God pure and without a grossly material body—that is to say, clothed with a body which we may suppose similar to the spiritual body which St. Paul speaks of, (1 Cor. xv.) and with which we are to be endowed after our restoration—was induced by the temptation of attaining to a yet higher state of perfection and resemblance to God, to transgress a divine command, and thus to violate that order, the observance of which was the condition of his lasting happiness. This temptation, in order to make the account more intelligible, is represented as having come from without. The voluntary deviation from the divine order—which being divine was necessarily also perfect, and alone in harmony with the plans of God—must inevitably have produced disorder and misery for the transgressor. The Record informs us, that the originally spiritual and immortal body became material and mortal, and that the whole creation was involved in the fall, (the earth was cursed,) and this could not have been otherwise, because man is represented as the lord of creation, and must consequently have stood in the most intimate connection and mutual relation with it.*

* The supplement at the end of the chapter contains some further remarks in elucidation of what is here said.

This truth St. Paul might assume to be generally known and acknowledged. He, therefore, merely recalls it to the recollection of his readers—"As by one man sin came into the world, so by sin came death."—Death, in the widest sense of the word, denotes also in this place, an existence opposed to a pure and spiritual state and to real life; it denotes existence in a material body and in the material world, departure from the true life in God, of which what is usually called death—the separation of the spirit from the material body, according to the laws of dissolution universally reigning in this world—is a necessary consequence. Now, if in this narrative every individual recognised his own history or in Adam what St. Paul calls him, a type of the future,—that is to say, a type of the whole race which was to enter the visible world, and of himself,—he would feel convinced of having himself fallen, as is said of Adam, by his own voluntary transgression of the divine order, into his present state of sinfulness and death; he would find the origin of evil within himself. The object of this communication, which is, to lead us to self-knowledge, humility and the desire for help, would then be accomplished, and is so accomplished in the case of every one whom it leads to recognise his own sinfulness; no matter whether the truth of his fall become evident

to him from the depths of his own consciousness without his being able to give a satisfactory account of its possibility, or whether he be able to attain a satisfactory insight into the subject, or to harmonize his consciousness with his philosophical system. But, as we have already observed, the pride of man rejects this humiliating truth, and the redeeming power must have prepared him for its reception, before he will acknowledge himself to have been the author of his own misery. He in whom the knowledge of God as the All-holy, All-good, has taken root, must needs have the firmest conviction that God cannot be the Author of evil; and the most subtle devices of the human understanding, for instance, that the most absolute contrast may have been necessary for the full manifestation of the Creator, or that what we call evil may not be so in reality but only in appearance—all such devices must vanish before his innermost conviction of the all-goodness of God, without whose will not a hair can fall to the ground. He will be assured that *with* the will of such a Father, *against* whose will nothing can come to pass, no existing evil (the origin of which would still remain unexplained) could ever have approached His creatures in such a manner that they could not possibly have resisted its influence. And this must lead him to the conviction that he himself

must have been a partaker in the transgression in which evil originated, because there remains no other possibility for its origin; and even though this possibility remain inexplicable to him, he will yet know it to be impossible that God should have been the Author of evil. What is as yet inexplicable to us *may* be true, an impossibility never can. Whoever has not attained to a knowledge of God preponderating over and influencing all his other convictions, must, if he endeavour to account for the origin of evil, necessarily fall into the grossest error in some shape or other, supposing always, that he acknowledge the law of necessity dominating in the visible world. But it would lead us too far away from our purpose, to develop this subject more fully in this place.

It is sufficiently known what extraordinary theories have been founded upon the Scriptural account of the fall, by men who did not recognise in the story of Adam the story of all men, and who did not understand or believe that each individual has voluntarily transgressed the divine command, as Adam, the prototype of the whole race, is related to have done. It was, they tell us, through Adam, the progenitor of all, that the whole race became degenerate and ungodly. Now whoever penetrates to the inner meaning of the narrative without dwelling on the outward

form of its presentation, neither seeks nor finds in it more than an account of his own sinfulness through his own fault. But whoever would understand it by reason only, however unobjectionable the attempt, can never attain any satisfactory result. He could not but find it inconsistent with his exalted conception of the Deity, that through the transgression of one, the greatest misery should have come upon so many millions, who could not, like him, be charged with deviating from the divine order.

St. Paul destroys this error of ascribing our own sin to another, root and branch. As Adam, he says, through sin or voluntary transgression of the divine law became mortal, so all men have subjected themselves to the dominion of death, because they have all sinned. No one has become miserable through Adam's transgression but through his own. That he may not, however, be misunderstood to mean, that every descendant of Adam has brought misery upon himself by the sins which he has committed in the visible world (which would still be open to the objection that the fall of Adam, and the sinfulness which he has inherited in consequence, renders it impossible for him to withstand sin, so that the burden of his guilt would still fall upon another), the Apostle adds, in order to show that every one has to share the guilt of the original

defection: for even before the promulgation of the Mosaic law, there was sin in the world; and yet it cannot have first arisen at that time, since where there is no law, none can become sinful and punishable by transgressing the law.* The origin of sin and culpability is inconceivable without the transgression of a divine command; but the men who lived from Adam to Moses, had no divine command given to them, by the transgression of which they might *become* sinful; and yet they were so. For death, which can have no existence except where there is sinfulness, as St. Paul expressly says in the 12th verse, was among them at that time as well as after the promulgation of the Mosaic law; they were mortal when they entered this world, and did not become mortal and consequently sinful, while they were living in it. (Compare page 94.) Now as man has not first become sinful while in his present existence, and yet, as St. Paul distinctly

* St. Paul cannot possibly mean by the words, "Sin is not reckoned where there is no law," that "sin remains unpunished, has no evil consequences where there is no law." For this would contradict his former representation of the natural state of man, and in particular, the passage, "For those who have sinned without law, shall without law be miserable." The inference which he draws is rather the converse. Since even those men who have not transgressed any positive law, experience the consequences of sin, it follows that they must have been *already* sinful when this positive law was given, and must have become sinful by some other means than the transgression of this positive law.

teaches, everyone has become sinful through his own fault, it follows that he must have sinned before he had existence in this world; that he must, like Adam, have voluntarily transgressed the divine command in some previous spiritual existence, in which he must from the immortal being that he was created, have become mortal like Adam, who is set before us as a type of all other spirits who are to enter this world in the shape of men.

Although the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls and the fall follows so naturally and irresistibly from what has been said, that no unprejudiced mind can consider it a strained deduction, yet it will not fail at first sight to be considered objectionable by many, because it has most singularly been thought to be at variance with the teaching of the Bible, and consequently of St. Paul, and because many do not find it reconcileable with their philosophical systems. It will be well, therefore, to enter more fully into the subject.

This doctrine cannot in any way be considered as at variance with any positive declarations of Scripture, or with any undoubted conclusions drawn from such declarations, because they are nowhere to be found. The Bible, on the contrary, speaks of the fall of the spirits, and thus not only explicitly acknowledges the possi-

bility but even the fact of such a fall, although it does not say that the spirits which have fallen were human spirits, or that human spirits were included among them. All, therefore, that can be said of this doctrine, in its relation to the Bible, is this, that it is not expressly set forth. But does it not appear quite consistent with the object of the Bible, that this truth like many others should not have been advanced as a positive tenet, or, as it were, an article of belief, but only intimated, leaving its development to the requirements of future times? The doctrine of pre-existence is clearly not one, the acceptance of which is a necessary condition of our appropriating all that is essential in Christianity; and for that reason St. Paul merely adverts to it in this place, and leaves it to the consideration of his readers, without entering deeply into the subject. The limits of his discourse confined him to what was requisite for establishing the fact, that every man has become sinful through his own fault, and not through that of others. He insists upon the acknowledgment of this fact, because upon it is founded the necessity of redemption, and of the appropriation of the help offered us by Christ.

It is, however, well known, and must not be forgotten, that this doctrine was also that of the most ancient religions on earth, into which,

during the infancy of the human race, it could hardly have been introduced by reflection, and from which it probably found its way, in a mutilated form, to the Greeks. Traces of this doctrine may be found also in the Old Testament; and amongst the Rabbins the opinion has been preserved, that all souls were created at one and the same time. And, in the first centuries of Christianity, we find the Gnostics teaching the fall of the spirits during a previous existence, and yet to some of them, notwithstanding the errors into which they fell, no one can deny the merit of a zealous searching after truth, or an earnest desire to arrive at more exalted views; and the pious and intellectual Origen and many other most exemplary fathers of the Church held the same opinion. Free inquiry was not as yet limited by ecclesiastical prescription as in later times, and Origen himself tells us that even the Church had come to no decision on this point. It maintained its ground in the Christian world for many centuries, notwithstanding the persecutions to which it exposed Origen and his meanest followers. The history of the Church shews us sufficiently, that these persecutions of Origen and the condemnation of his doctrine as heretical, were influenced by the vilest passions and worldly interest, and that the latter was by no means a consequence of a solid refutation. But it is very natural that a

doctrine which had become suspicious should not have been again adopted in times in which it became more and more dangerous to differ from the dominant party, and in which the dogmatic interest had taken an opposite direction. Independently of this, the Oriental Church was soon after plunged into great difficulties from without; and in the West, where these spiritual views had never taken any deep root, the philosophical systems which prevailed at that time, prevented their development; and so it has remained up to our own time.

We see nothing, then, to prevent our making the doctrine of a spiritual creation before that of the visible world, to which St. Paul himself has led us, the subject of a free inquiry; on the contrary, the exigencies of our times appear to require it most particularly. For although Christianity may be practically understood and applied independently of this doctrine, it is yet of the highest importance for such a philosophical conception of it as is evidently a desideratum of our times, not only to meet the presumption of shallowness, but also the arrogance of those who would tolerate Christianity only as inferior or subservient to their philosophy. Such an irreverent toleration, however, is irreconcilable with the nature and dignity of the Gospel, which is presented to us as a power of

God for salvation, and as the hidden wisdom of God become apparent, and which, founded upon and completed within itself, far transcends all human wisdom. St. Paul unfolds this hidden wisdom of God in this Epistle; and if we are entitled to expect that his doctrine should contain all that is necessary to render it complete for all times, we must certainly not neglect to avail ourselves of any hint which he may give us, if we would embrace it in all its depth and fulness. But whether pre-existence be a hint of this description, as we have inferred it to be from the discourse of the Apostle, and whether we understand him rightly, can be ascertained only by examining whether it makes clear what was incomprehensible before, and whether it throws a light upon the whole system, worthy of the exalted idea of God, for which we are indebted to the revelation through Christ. That this is the case with respect to that part of the Epistle which we have hitherto considered must, we believe, be admitted by every unprejudiced reader, and it will have to be equally admitted with respect to that part which we have still to examine.

The complete proof that an investigation of the free will of man, assuming the existence of God, will also lead to the doctrine of pre-existence by philosophical methods, must be

reserved for another work, but as we proceed we shall find occasion to give several hints respecting the importance of this doctrine in the solution of the most difficult metaphysical problems. We will here advert only to one difficulty which many will at first sight raise against this doctrine, namely, the want of all recollection of a previous existence. This objection, may be most satisfactorily answered, but we will, in this place, only remind our readers, that the purer the idea which we are able to form of the life of blessed spirits, the more shall we be convinced that the state of those who have left such a communion, must have been such that the power of thinking as they thought in their former state, and the clear recollection of the state itself, must have ceased together; just as a lunatic, although he continues to be the same person, has lost all recollection of his former state. St. Paul describes (more particularly in the seventh chapter) the state of man in his lowest condition, as a paralysis of all the nobler faculties, as an obscuration of the intellect, preventing the perception of the true nature of things, (and consequently of the spiritual world, to which he essentially belongs, and from which he has fallen,) or, in fact, as a state of insanity. Now, if we abandon the idea of our being banished into the material world

for the punishment or atonement of former guilt, which is unworthy of the God of love, and consider our present life as a divine scheme for our restoration, will not this want of recollection of the previous state appear explained, as well as the fact of the longing for our former home increasing with the progress of our restoration; although, according to our human organization, this longing may more frequently exhibit itself as a hope for the future, than as a remembrance of the past? But do we not even now belong to the spiritual world to which we shall belong hereafter? Christ tells us that the kingdom of God is within us; and how is a past, present, or future conceivable in reference to a spiritual world? The pride of man may resist the idea of our being all in a state of delusion; but does not all knowledge that we acquire prove that we were in error before?

After this, as it appeared to us, necessary digression, we now return to our subject.

We have yet to notice that the Apostle says, in accordance with the ancient Record, that sin and death proceeded from one man, although he had shown that the spirits who afterwards appeared on earth in the shape of men, had *all*, during their former spiritual existence, voluntarily taken part in the transgression of the divine law which occasioned their own misery

and the debasement of the spiritual creation to a grosser or more material condition. This is easily accounted for, if we assume the spirit, who afterwards appeared on earth as the man Adam, to have been the originator of the transgression, and that all the others followed him. Thus may the party who originates a rebellion against a lawful sovereign, be justly called the cause of all the evil which he occasions, notwithstanding that all who join him voluntarily—and compulsion is not to be thought of in a community of free spirits—are punishable in like manner. But we need not even think of any positive punishment, for the departure from the divine order could not but bring misery on the transgressor from its very nature. This spiritual view which St. Paul takes of the ancient narrative, does not in any way affect the historical Adam. If the spiritual Adam had become ungodly, the man Adam must needs develop himself and act according to his nature, which had become impure.

Thus then has St. Paul demonstrated in the clearest manner what he intended to prove. All spiritual beings had fallen through their own fault into the depths of misery, and the redeeming God began their salvation when He prepared out of chaos the field for their development and

restoration, when they were all as yet utterly powerless for good, sinners and enemies of God.

It is impossible, that through the transgression of one man misery should have been brought upon all, without their having been partakers of his guilt, (although this is an opinion very generally adopted,) as God could neither punish the guiltless in place of the guilty, nor allow any being created by Him to suffer otherwise than for his own benefit. But all have been guilty; and yet in His mercy does God, through Christ, the redeeming God, release all from the consequences of their guilt, as St. Paul had before shown. Although the transgression proceeded from One, and the salvation also from One, the fall and the redemption must yet not be simply set against each other, as might be done if one only had committed the transgression, and the one Saviour had made the atonement for the consequences of such transgression. But as it is, the mercy of God is immeasurable in a twofold way. This the Apostle expresses in the following verses:—

15—19. But it is not with the gift of grace as with the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more hath the grace of God, and the gift

which was bestowed by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, fallen abundantly to the
 16 share of the many. And it is not with the gift as with that [which took place] by one sin. For the punishment which followed from one [sin] was death, but the gift of grace leadeth us from many sins unto justifi-
 17 cation. For if by one transgression death reigned by means of the one man, much more shall they who receive the fulness of the grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.
 18 Therefore, as by one transgression (there came) destruction for all men, so also by one righteousness (came) for all men justifi-
 19 cation of life. For, as by the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of the one man the many are made righteous.

If only one, Adam, had transgressed, according to the opinion generally received, the re-

15 χάρις seems to be here applied by the Apostle to God; the love of God, which is the ground of redemption; δωρεά its carrying out by Christ, the gracious devotion of Christ for the salvation of the fallen; οἱ πολλοί are undoubtedly *all men*, as follows unquestionably from the 18th verse; but not on that account '*all*' absolutely. See my interpretation following.—16 I follow the MSS. which read ἀμαρτήματος, and the authority of which is quite as great as that of the rest which have ἀμαρτήσαντος; and in the following verse, ἐν τῷ ἐνι instead of τῷ τοῦ ἐνός. According to the or-

deeming mercy would have had to remove only the consequences of that one transgression. But many have been partakers in his guilt, and have fallen into misery with him; and all these have attained salvation through the one Redeemer. Had only one species of sin been committed, the Redeemer would have had to take away the consequences only of that one sin. But the natural punishment, the consequence of the first transgression, was universal sinfulness, because it is the nature of sin or of deviation from the divine law, that a multitude of sins should develop themselves out of that first sin, as many branches shoot from the same stem. The many-headed monster sin, as St. Paul represents it in the first chapter, when he depicts the state of fallen man, sprang from the first transgression, and produced that deplorable state, which the Apostle so emphatically calls death, total alienation from God, in contradistinction to true life, which is life in God. The unhappy beings fell into the abyss of misery, as if a sentence of death had been executed upon them. And out of this

dinary reading, the whole passage expresses but one thought, one contrast, of which the one is a superfluous repetition of the other. But according to the reading I have adopted, two important contrasts, to which St. Paul wished to call attention, are plainly brought forward. It is by no means clear why St. Paul should have added *διὰ τοῦ ἐνός* in the 17th verse, if the preceding *ἐνός*, as well as the following, were to be referred to Adam—*κατάκριμα*. Sentence of death, and so, death, destruction.

manifold misery did the One Redeemer release them. As different diseases require different treatment at the hands of the physician, so did the Redeemer bring to each fallen being those particular aids which he required, so did He restore health and life to all who had fallen under the dominion of death. His mercy and wisdom knew how to apply to every evil its appropriate remedy, for each individual sin the proper means of deliverance and justification. Incomparably greater, then, was the help brought by the One Redeemer, so that it can in no way be simply set against the transgression. The one transgression occasioned the transgression of many, and one sin produced a multiplicity of sins, which encompassed the whole race and kept it in bondage, so that even the remembrance of the former freedom and independence was lost, and death and misery reigned where once in God's own likeness free and independent spirits had reigned, who now, in disgraceful bondage, were slaves to sin and death. Out of this multiplicity of sins and misery did the One Redeemer release the many; not by compulsion, which would have been incompatible with their original freedom, but, through His powerful help, fitting the circumstances of their lives, so as to furnish them opportunities and means for their justification; from this state of degradation and

misery does He restore them to a divine freedom ; so that where not some mighty spirit, but death and nothingness had reigned, (mark the power of the expression,) the liberated spirits shall reign in the fulness of true life, through Jesus Christ. And not only shall they regain what they had lost. They shall reign even more than in their original state. They shall go forth triumphant from the conflict, in which they had been vanquished. If we compass this idea in all its fulness we may certainly say : As through the transgression of one a multiplicity of sins resulted, so through one Redeemer, justification ; for the work of redemption is one, one the atonement through which Christ perfects and sanctifies all for ever. And as through one man's disobedience the many became sinners, so through the obedience of one, through His constancy in adhering to the one order established by God, through His steadfast adherence to the great plan of redemption, have the many been justified, who will now for ever persevere with the firmest conviction in the one, the divine order in which alone real peace and blessedness are to be found.

It is not, I think, without reason that the Apostle here uses the expression, *the many*, instead of all. There can be no doubt whatever that he concedes the benefits of the re-

demption to all the spirits, who have taken part in the defection of the first transgressor. He says, in the 18th verse, expressly and without any reservation, that the justification of life came upon *all men*, so that not one of them can be considered as excluded, unless we would put a strained meaning upon the most definite and plain words of the Apostle. But not only is it possible that not absolutely *all* the spirits who lived in blissful communion with those who fell, were involved in the fall, but, on the contrary, the possibility of their remaining in their original blissful state must necessarily be admitted, if that state was one of perfect freedom. If, then, some of the spirits participated not in the fall through a voluntary transgression of the divine law, or if St. Paul only meant to leave this undetermined, he could not say *all*, but only the many, who had really shared in the transgression.

We have yet to notice that in the 14th verse St. Paul calls the redeeming God *the Man* Jesus Christ, although Christ lived in the glory of the Father before the world was, and although St. Paul does not consider Him as the Redeemer of the world *because* of His having taken on Him the state of man. In a similar manner he might say of Adam, that through one man sin and death came into the world, without

meaning to imply that it was the *man* Adam through whom sin and death came into the world.

20—21. But the law came in between, in order that sin might develop itself with greater power. But when sin came forward with greater power, then grace became much
21 more overpowering; in order that as sin reigned in death, so also grace may reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Between the times of the most unbounded sinfulness and the restoration, an intermediate state, the law, was necessary, in order that the dreadful consequences of sin might develop themselves and become apparent in their fullest deformity. A deep sense of his own misery and of its cause was necessary, in order to create an intense longing in man for his deliverance. This was the object of the law; this it had power to accomplish, although it had no power of leading to salvation. The Apostle touches only slightly upon this subject here, and treats it more fully in the seventh chapter. He merely adverts to the fact, that this intermediate state, or indispensable period of transition was also devised by one and the same redeeming

Power. He tells us, that although the most complete development of sin was indispensable, it is gloriously overpowered by redeeming grace; that in the visible world also it must needs be that death and sin should reign in order to be destroyed, so that grace alone may reign, which, through righteousness, that is through the annihilation of all evil, will lead to true freedom and eternal life.

What a scene does the Apostle thus open to our spiritual view! What a glorious contemplation! How do the boldest flights of our imagination, and how does the wisdom of this world, presumptuous in its nothingness, vanish before this reality, this wisdom of God!

Yet, alas! how has this heavenly truth been dragged down to the dust of earth! How has this All-love been mistaken, which wills that not one of God's creatures should be lost, but that all should be saved, and which has the power also to accomplish what it wills! St. Paul teaches that we have all transgressed the divine law, in which alone is blessedness, and that redeeming grace will restore us to eternal felicity and freedom, notwithstanding our guilt. Christ, on the cross, prays for His murderers: "Father forgive them!" He who said, "Father, I know that Thou hearest me at all times," and who knew, therefore, that His

prayer would be heard!—And men, adhering to the letter which killeth, incapable of fathoming the spirit of eternal love, which is hidden in the letter, and which the quickening spirit alone can interpret,—men have taught that through the guilt of one man, myriads of spiritual beings have become powerless for all godliness, that by the guilt of one man unspeakable misery has been brought into the world! And of these who are thus suffering, without any guilt of their own, by far the greater number are to be doomed for all eternity to misery surpassing all human conception; and this according to the predisposing will of God, who is Love! Verily, they know not what they do!

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MOSAIC HISTORY OF THE CREATION AND THE FALL.

FOR those who would enquire how far the view we have taken is reconcileable with what we read on this subject in the first three chapters of Genesis, we add the following observations. We must confine ourselves to a few brief suggestions, as a more extended investigation would lead us beyond the limits of our undertaking. We take it for granted that we have readers who will neither search in these venerable Records for instruction on metaphysical or physical subjects in the sense of our schools, nor, on the other hand, look upon them as historical facts to be literally understood; who will not consider themselves bound to believe the days of creation to have been solar days, when as yet no sun was in existence, or the serpent to have been a real serpent endowed with human speech, created by God as an evil being and a tempter to newly created man, thus unintentionally constituting God the Author of evil. We look upon

these Records as holy voices from the primeval world, enunciating in the most inspired and glowing language, truths of the highest importance for our race in its infancy, as well as for all generations. God, they say, is the Author of all being. He created light in the darkness, and produced order out of disorder. Evil took its rise from the guilt of the created. They convey information respecting the origin, progress, and final destiny of man, in a form far exalted above any invented by human wisdom, which always remains exposed to the varying influences of times, countries, and habits; comprehensible in their *essence* to our race in its infancy; objects of ridicule only to fools that pride themselves in their ignorance; but objects of veneration, and fountains of ever deepening knowledge for all who seek divine wisdom with an unprejudiced, childlike mind.

Whoever reads the first three chapters of Genesis with attention will easily find that they contain at least two distinct Records, the one, from the beginning to the 4th verse of the second chapter, the other from thence to the end of the third chapter. The former begins with the most essential of all truths, "God is the Cause of all being," and then considering chaos, the origin of which it neither adverts to nor explains, as already in existence, proceeds

at once to describe with imposing truthfulness the approach of God as the Author of light, the first display of His power being the separation of light and darkness. He organises the forces of nature, brings them into activity for the furtherance of His great designs, separates what is above from what is below, divides the waters, lets the dry land appear, and develops, in their natural succession, first the vegetable then the animal kingdom, and, last of all man, the noblest of all animals, gloriously endowed and destined for dominion over the whole creation, but as *male and female from the first*, thus closing the series of created beings. The blessing in this place bestowed upon the new pair is this: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."

In the second Record or narrative, viewed from its human and practical side, we certainly notice, first a description of newly-created man with dispositions and inclinations, which were intended to find their first development in the culture of the earth. The first education of man is analogous to that of a wise human parent, who, knowing that his child is not free from evil dispositions, requires obedience from him while inexperienced and incapable of judgment, and punishes disobedience severely, although only for the child's benefit. From this side also, does this representation convey the most striking and

instructive hints respecting human nature. But if we examine more closely the purport of this Record, we find that it conceals another and a deeper sense. It speaks vaguely in the introduction of an earlier period before any vegetable creation, and then proceeds at once, which is very observable, without adverting to the creation of the earth, of vegetation and animal life, to the creation of man; and it is here that we find it stated, that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, which makes man appear as the first and most immediate spiritual production of God in the whole course of this creation, and consequently as a being perfect in its nature, as none other could proceed from the hand of God. The scene of action allotted to him is depicted with supernatural colours, but under figures adapted to the requirements of our senses, for how could anything be made apparent to us otherwise? We find the tree of life growing in the midst of the garden, and with it the tree of knowledge. A free exercise of his powers, and a free enjoyment of all that is beautiful and good, is permitted to newly-created man; but he is required to remain within the bounds of the higher order prescribed by God Himself, in order to continue in this blissful enjoyment, since all deviation from the divine order is fatal. God had certainly created

man in His own image, but it was impossible that he should be equal to his Creator. A created being, he could not possess the intelligence which the Uncreated alone possesses. If the created with an intelligence ever so great yet naturally limited, dared to set up a new order of his own, the consequences of which his finite knowledge could not foresee, he must needs introduce disturbing elements into the divine and alone perfect order. This is expressed by the command: "Of the tree of knowledge thou shalt not eat." Man had proceeded immortal from the hand of God; for he is told that he shall *become* mortal if he wilfully transgress the divine command. How, indeed, could an immediate production of the immortal God be otherwise than similar to Him—immortal, spiritual, immaterial? for all that is material is mortal. Nor could the supernatural scene of action for this supernatural being be material; it must have been conformable to his spiritual nature. How could an immaterial being stand in intimate, mutual relation with a grossly material nature, or how could the latter be even thought of as the immediate production of God who is a Spirit? And yet an intimate relation between the created and nature, as it then existed, was indispensable, if he was to exercise an active influence upon it; and that this was intended, is

significantly intimated by the expression: "Adam *called* all the creatures," which, in the sense of the ancient language, denotes a description of the object so called according to its essential character, and consequently pre-supposes an intimate knowledge and relationship, if we may not look for a still deeper sense. Indeed St. Paul's saying (Rom. viii. 19.) that the whole [present] creation groans for deliverance, pre-supposes a previous state of freedom, and consequently a higher state from which it has fallen. From the person of the created, who up to that time is to be considered as a unity, another is taken, a second self, who is brought to him as a helpmate; both therefore are intimately connected, and both together form but one; the one an active, creative, the other a passive, recipient, developing power. Considered as the breath of the one indivisible God, the created being, in likeness of his Creator, must needs be thought of as a unity, as in reference to God nothing can be conceived as external, that He could receive unto Himself. A created spirit, however, cannot be an indivisible creative power; it must receive from without, and this is a necessary difference between its Creator and itself. It is important to notice that we find no blessing of fruitfulness pronounced upon this unity divided into two. *This* Adam, says St.

Paul, was the type of humanity; what is said of him is applicable to all created beings similar to him. Consequently, in this state in which all already existed, there could be no multiplying, as in the subsequent material world, when according to the order established by God one pair was destined to appear in the first instance and to furnish by propagation, to all other fallen spirits of their class, the opportunity of entering on humanity. The created being, happy in the order established by God, and organised for a free continuance in that happy state, took occasion from his capability for contemplating and examining what was given him, to devise and set up another order of his own, and thus transgressed the limits implied in the very idea of created beings, by undertaking that of which with his finite though ample intelligence, he could not foresee the consequences and therefore took them upon himself. Our narrative gives us no occasion to enter, in this place, into an examination of the Creator's object in leaving to the created being the possibility of error, or how it was possible that in his state of bliss he should have been tempted to desire a change. We shall merely observe that this was requisite, if the created being was to possess the highest similarity to God, which is freedom; and with that freedom there must have been possibility for error, since

the intelligence of the created could not be infinite like the divine intelligence; the tree of knowledge is therefore a figure of deep significance. The created fell, and disorder and sufferings were the unavoidable consequence of his fall. The higher creation, intimately connected with him, was involved in this disorder. He is banished from Paradise through his own guilt, and cannot return through his own strength. Cherubs with flaming swords prevent his regress. Clothed in a human body we find him again on earth, which is involved with him in the direful consequences of his fall, suffering and toiling in the degraded nature which was a consequence of the order which *he* had set up in opposition to God's; but suffering under the loving eyes of the Deity, who never loses sight of him, suffering for his own benefit, in order that through experience he may be cured of his error, and that the conviction necessary for true felicity may gain life in him, that no order is perfect but that established by God. It is this knowledge, which we have acquired through the power of the Redeemer, that turns aside the flaming swords of the Cherubs and introduces him into the new heaven, where there is a tree of life, but no tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Rev. xxii.)

If we now consider all that has been said, we shall easily perceive the following succession of

ideas. We find first the great fundamental truth enunciated: God is the first cause of all being. The narrative then exhibits to us, (ii. 4—iii.) in its spiritual import, the original spiritual creation of God, blissful and free spirits, who from causes as yet unexplained, fall from their blissful state through abuse of their freedom and involve the higher creation in their fall. The consequence is disorder, darkness, chaos. The redeeming God approaches this chaos, (i. 2—ii. 3.) and His approach brings light into the darkness. His wisdom separates, regulates, and imposes the salutary restraints of natural laws on the warring elements, subjects all to necessity in hope, (Rom. viii. 20.) that is for salvation, and makes earth the scene of the gradual development and restoration of the fallen spirits. The same second narrative (ii. 4—iii.) shows us in a more comprehensive manner, the first man originally in Paradise, where we find him as yet totally unexperienced, and a bountiful nature supplying all his wants. But here the evil within him, of his own creating, develops itself necessarily, though under divine guidance, for his good. We find him subjected to the laws of necessity, and to the toils and sufferings of life, in which the progress of his history exhibits him.

To this view of the sublime Record we have been led by St. Paul himself, who teaches us

in many places, how under the veil of holy traditions, without in the least detracting from their historical importance, we may look for a deeper sense, which, rightly understood, opens for us a vast treasure of divine knowledge. Thus when the Apostle speaks of the change effected through Christ of the earthly into the heavenly man, he regards the historical Adam as the first man on earth, made into natural life, and the natural body as the first body. (1 Cor. xv. 45 ff.) But when, as in this place, he speaks of the spiritual origin of evil, he regards him as the type of the whole human race, and then he carries his fall and theirs back to a former antehuman existence.

Let him who finds these hints in accordance with the spirit of the Apostle and with the spirit of Christianity, make use of them with us; and let him who does not, lay them aside without taking offence. All things are not for all men.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—11. What shall we say then? Shall we persist in sin, that grace may the more abound?
2 God forbid! How shall we who are dead
3 to sin, any longer live in it? Or know ye not that all of us who have been baptised unto Jesus Christ, have been baptised into
4 His death? We were then buried with Him by baptism into His death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in a
5 new life. For, if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, then we shall also be so in that of His resurrection;
6 since we know, that our old man was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no
7 longer serve sin. For he who is dead is
8 become free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ we believe that we shall
9 also live with Him, because we know that Christ who hath risen from the dead, dieth not again, death ruleth over Him no more.
10 For that which died, died once for all unto

sin; but that which liveth, liveth unto God.

11 Thus do ye also account yourselves dead to sin, but alive for God in Jesus Christ (our Lord).

We have said, continues the Apostle, that it was necessary that sin should be powerfully displayed, that grace might be set forth still more powerfully. Now can any one draw the conclusion from this, that we should persist in sin, in order that grace may be the mightier? No one who has entered into the spirit of the Apostle's views can possibly do so. Had St.

5. *σύμφυτοι*, grown together, fully united with Him, expresses, much more than, participators in fortune. If we are truly baptised into His death, we are most intimately united with Him; whence it follows that as He is risen from the dead, so we also being a part of Himself, participate in this resurrection. This explains the use of the future quite simply. If any one has entered into this intimate union with Christ, for him life with Christ follows necessarily from death with Him. There can be no allusion here to the future resurrection.—7. St. Paul here briefly expresses the same idea which he afterwards more fully develops. As bodily death puts an end to bodily slavery so our dying to sin releases us from its service, consequently the perfect *δεδικαίωται* has neither the signification of the present, (for whoever dies to sin *δεδικ.* *ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμ.* is acquitted from its service, is released from it, emancipated,) nor is a divine acquittal of punishment, or justification, here spoken of; and consequently Winer (*Gramm.* I. 104) is incorrect in supposing that the word, “freed,” is to be understood, and the passage to be translated “is justified and freed from the punishment of sin.”—10. *ὁ γὰρ ἀπέθανε*—*ὁ δὲ ζῇ*, that which died of Christ, His mortal part, died, etc.; but that which liveth, *i. e.* His spirit, liveth for God.

Paul chosen to shape his arguments according to our methods, he might have said, since sin and misery inevitably exist together, the wish to continue in sinfulness is tantamount to the wish to remain miserable and unhappy; and since deliverance from sin is at the same time deliverance from misery, and the peace with God, which we enjoy through Christ, is incompatible with perseverance in sin, it obviously follows, that whoever imagines himself to be in a state of grace, and yet continues in sin, deceives himself; he is attempting to unite two things which cannot exist together. We have said before, that no one becomes a true son of Abraham by the outward mark: in like manner, no one becomes a true Christian by the outward symbol of baptism. He alone is a true Christian, who, penetrated with abhorrence of all ungodliness, is firmly resolved to devote himself for ever to godliness through Christ. St. Paul expresses this idea in a much more powerful and impressive manner, by a very striking metaphor. How shall we that are dead to sin, we that have given up our very existence with respect to it, still continue in it? The very idea is self-contradictory. And so again conversely, whoever imagines that he can unite the life in God through Christ with the life in sin, is not of those whom the Apostle here speaks of. "Know

ye not the high import of baptism, by which we are united with Christ?" When we are plunged into the water (according to the ancient custom) and, as it were, into the purifying Christ, (*εἰς Χριστόν*), we are also plunged into His death. A death must ensue within us, and a new life commence. We are buried with Him through baptism into His death, that as Christ was raised to a new life through the power and glory of the Father, working mightily and gloriously in Him, so we also may rise to a new life, to a perfectly changed existence. The immersion is a symbol of the burial, and the emersion of the resurrection to a new life. For if we have become united with Him, become part of Himself, and if we die and are buried with Him, we cannot but be united with Him in the resurrection, as He could not leave part of Himself in the grave. If we die, like Christ and with Christ, to sin, we must needs also live, with Him and like Him, to godliness. Death to sin is the commencement of life in God, so that whoever does not as yet live a new life, is not dead to sin and deceives himself if he imagine that he has been baptised indeed. Christ died the death on the cross, and His human life—that life which He took upon Himself on account of sin, in which He, immaculate Himself, was exposed to the outward dominion and persecutions of sin—was

brought to a close with His death. Now if we are baptised into His death on the cross, our previous life, in which we were under the dominion of sin, our old man, will be crucified and have died with Him, that the body, as it were, in which we lived our former life, and in which sin within us had dominion over us, as the sin *without Christ* had dominion over His mortal body, might be destroyed, and that so through the death of this body that was enslaved by sin, our bondage to sin might cease. As the slave becomes liberated by the death of his master, and as the relation between them ceases with his death, so are we liberated from sin, emancipated from the dominion which it exercised over us, as soon as the death of the body of sin (not the death of our fleshly body) has separated us from it.

This furnishes a complete explanation of the expression *body of sin* in so far as it is figuratively used; an expression of which so many explanations have been attempted, and which has been so generally misunderstood. It is clear that St. Paul is not speaking of the death of the material body, because if *that death* could release man from sin, and secure justification and perfection, then death would be our Redeemer, and not Christ, and all men would, after death, be free from sin, no matter how they had spent their lives, or in what state they were at the

time of their death. It is to be recollected also, that St. Paul immediately after, (ver. 15.) enjoins all who have died to sin, to consecrate their members to the service of God, which presupposes a life in the body.

According to what we have before seen, the grossly material body is certainly a consequence and production of sin, and must be destroyed before the dominion of the spirit can become complete and universal. (See viii. 10.) But this cannot be accomplished by the mere natural decomposition of the body in the grave, because, in that case, all spirits would at once become pure by their very separation from the body in death, and there could be no *unclean spirits*. It is, therefore, not the body alone which is carried to the grave that belongs to sin, or constitutes the body of sin. We shall have to return to this subject hereafter; it is sufficient for our present purpose to observe, that *all in man that belongs to sin* because it is a production of sin, is to be understood by the body of sin, which has been crucified with Christ, and from which we are separated by baptism into His death.

If then we have died with Christ and have left the body of sin, as Christ at His death left that body which He had taken upon Himself for the sins of others, and which was therefore also a consequence of sin, we have the blissful

conviction that we shall also live with Him and remain with Him in that new existence, in which sin and death have no more power over us. For we know that Christ, having risen from the dead, dieth not again, death ruleth over Him no more. We know that Christ—who although He was Himself free from sin, yet through His boundless love, so completely subjected Himself to the conditions of humanity and the outward dominion of sin as to allow it to pour out upon Him its utmost wrath, to persecute Him, and even to put an end to His life by the most painful and ignominious death—we know that He is no more exposed to the persecutions and to the dominion of sin, which is alien to His nature. The powers of darkness were allowed to exercise their dominion over Him but once; with His resurrection He has again taken His sovereignty upon Him, and leads a life with God. Not indeed, that He interests Himself no longer in the sinful world; His present life as God, continues to be devoted to the powerful assistance of all who require His help; it is He who so orders the destinies of men, that each receives what he requires according to his condition in order to attain spiritual health and true life. But as Sovereign He governs the world for its salvation; the power of sin can no more reach Him, death and evil have no more dominion over

Him, who hath been raised to the glory of the Father. He died, as it were, to sin, and was rescued by His death, from its persecutions. "Thus do ye also account yourselves dead to sin, but alive for God in Jesus Christ." Although you are as yet living in the world of sin, exposed to its temptations and its persecutions, although you have as yet to dwell, for your own good, in this visible sphere of action, in order to be fully purified, reckon yourselves dead to sin, let not evil gain dominion within you, and know that the evil *without* you has no power over your true spiritual life, reckon yourselves already belonging to a more exalted existence, and live unto God in Jesus Christ.

- 12—14. Let not sin then reign any more in
 your mortal body, that ye should obey it;
 13 give not up your members to sin as weapons
 of unrighteousness, but give yourselves up
 to God as risen from the dead, and your
 members to God as weapons of righteous-
 14 ness. For sin shall not reign over you, for
 ye are not under the law but under grace.

The Apostle shows in these verses the practical inference to be drawn from what he has said. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.

12.—Some MSS. have *ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ*, which is probably a spurious insertion.

Although the body in which you are as yet living, as a consequence of sin, is mortal, and in a certain sense the property of sin, yet sin is no more to exercise dominion over it, after the body of sin (ver. 6) has been surrendered to death, and you have thereby died to sin. We shall find no contradiction in this, if we recollect that matter, although a production of sin, is so disposed by the redeeming power, as to become the means of purification, and to be more and more subjected to the dominion of the spirit. In your mortal body also you may and are to live in God. Is not the life of Christ to be an example in this respect also? He lived during His sojourn on earth in a body formed of the same material as our own; but His pure, divine spirit held such dominion over it, that it could in no wise become the occasion or the instrument of sin. In the same manner are we, in proportion as we become pure and godly, to consider even our bodies as withdrawn from the dominion of sin. We are no longer to imagine ourselves slaves to sin, or suppose that our spirit has not full power over the body. Do not faintheartedly, and slothfully allow sin to abuse your members, as though you were compelled to yield, or unable to withstand its allurements; do not allow sin to use your body as a weapon in its warfare against the kingdom of light. Give yourselves up completely to

God, as men won for His kingdom, and yield unto Him your bodies as weapons of righteousness in the struggle of light against the power of darkness. Give yourselves up to God, and take your stand through His strength, as resolute champions of truth and right; for sin has no longer any claim upon you or power over you; you are sure of the help of your new lord, for you are no more under the law, by the existence of which the dominion of sin was acknowledged, but under grace, which is the end of the dominion of sin, so that you now belong to God through Christ.

We are, therefore, not to underrate, neglect, or mortify our mortal body, as if that were the means to attain to a spiritual and godly life; but we are, on the contrary, to maintain it in vigour, and to employ it in the service of God. For although but for the spiritual fall our material body would not have existed,* it does not by any means follow, that it is to be despised or made light of. God Himself has framed it most wonderfully, to be instrumental in our purification and the recovery of our lost freedom. To despise this body, would be tantamount to despising God's dispensations for our good. He would never have clothed us with this body, if

* As Adam is described in his primitive condition in Paradise, as without a mortal and consequently material body.

we could have reached our destination without. (Compare page 180.) If we cast it from us, or dream away in idle contemplation the life granted us for the attainment of so high a purpose, we cannot surely consider ourselves to have reached that state of mind of which St. Paul here speaks, and in which we are to fight resolutely in the cause of truth.—It is through the Spirit, not through the body, that the works of the flesh are to be mortified. (viii. 13.)

But does not St. Paul make an excessive demand upon mankind? Are even they who with the most lively and deep-rooted convictions of its divineness adopt Christianity, at once dead to sin? Does not our daily experience, on the contrary, convince us that even they have many a hard battle to fight against sin, and that in reality no man is free from its assaults? And is no one to consider himself in that state of grace and peace with God, of which the Apostle speaks, while yet exposed to such assaults?—We must recollect, that although St. Paul makes this claim, his principal intention was to mark the contrast between the two states of mind, to show that perfect peace with God excludes the dominion of sin altogether; indeed it follows from what he had before stated, that all unrighteousness is utterly repugnant to God, and incompatible with His kingdom. He sets forth the

ideal of such a state as Christ sets forth the ideal of moral perfection in the words: "Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." For although it might be supposed that St. Paul intended to qualify his demand by the words: "Let not sin *reign* in your mortal body," and although they in whom godliness has gained the ascendancy, and who regard the power of sin as an alien and usurped power, and not as one to whose dominion they owe allegiance, are undoubtedly in a state of peace with God, and are firmly convinced that the work begun will be at some time perfected; it is nevertheless apparent that the Apostle's claim is of a higher order, because he enjoins us not to allow sin to use our members as weapons against godliness by ever yielding to it, but to resign ourselves to God unreservedly, and to fight on the side of truth. It is of the highest importance for us to have such an ideal of the perfection of human life at all times before our eyes, that we may in humility acknowledge how much yet remains to be accomplished, and so avail ourselves more and more of the proffered help, for "sin shall not reign over us." Whoever has left the region of the law and entered into that of grace, is not separated from the former region, as by a wall of brass; he is still exposed to the assaults of the enemy, but he recognises him as

an enemy ; he does not acknowledge his sovereignty, but fights against him. But if we raise ourselves to an ideal view, if we imagine a state of perfection, we see that the two regions are totally distinct from each other without any possibility of communication.

But how is it that the Apostle demands any activity at all on the part of man, when he has before denied him all power of his own for godliness, and described him as by nature powerless for good ? when he has taught us that Christ alone is the Author and Finisher of our salvation, and that God works within us both to will and to do ? It is a question of great importance which here claims our attention, although St Paul does not bring it under our immediate notice. It is upon the absolute insufficiency of man that the Apostle founds his whole doctrine of salvation ; in the course also of this Epistle, he describes man as in a state of bondage to sin, and altogether unfree ; he represents redemption as God's scheme to *lead* man out of this bondage to freedom, God having concluded all, (bound all by positive laws and rules,) that He might have mercy upon all, (xi. 32.) leaving nothing to the will of man, (ix. 16.) but working all by His own predetermined will, by unalterable, necessary laws, since, being not the Author of confusion but of order, He could not work otherwise than by

law and rule, and since His will, being alone perfect, must needs contain within itself the most perfect, and consequently unalterable rule. St. Paul, therefore, teaches the dependence of the will and subjection of man to a law of necessity, as positively as it has ever been assumed by any philosophical inquirer after the laws of cause and effect. (Comp. page 145.) And yet we find him here speaking to men, as though it depended altogether upon their own will to withstand the assaults of sin, and so often admonishing (which pre-supposes the possibility of obeying,) and requiring us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.—How, then, are these apparent discrepancies to be reconciled?—St. Paul does not enter upon the solution of this difficulty, because he knows that he may in this respect trust to the consciousness of all who have not been led astray by the treacherous workings of their mere understanding. This consciousness will not allow man, while he is doing wrong, to doubt that he is himself the agent, for otherwise he could not feel compunction and repentance; nor can he fail to know, if he has been acting rightly, that a power of his own has been at work, even with the most genuine Christian conviction of God's working within him. For if he were a mere instrument worked by the will of another, he could not feel

either content or discontent with respect to his actions. And even so the thinker, who has been brought by his own reasonings to consider himself a mere instrument of fate without a will of his own, will, if he fall into danger, call the power within him into action to extricate himself, in spite of all his theories. Although there was no occasion for St. Paul to solve difficulties of this description in a systematic manner—the Gospel which he preaches being not a metaphysical inquiry, but a power of God unto salvation—yet he has not overlooked the requirements of those who, like ourselves, must needs have these difficulties solved for the sake of their peace of mind. The doctrine of necessity in the visible world, for which we have the double authority of revelation and reason, and which it would, therefore, be the veriest perversity to set at nought, brings forth religious and philosophical monstrosities* only in the case of our supposing the spirit of man to be created at the same time with his present body, which assumption is warranted neither by revelation nor by

* Blind fate; or ascribing the origin of evil to God; or an evil god of equal power and eternity with the good God; or a God of whom we allow on the one hand that he is Love, but maintain on the other that He has created the greater part of men for eternal misery; or postulating a human freedom, the impossibility of which is demonstrable, etc.

reason.* St. Paul, however, does not say that when we voluntarily gave ourselves up to sin we were beings such as we now are, incapable of good, clothed with the body of sin, and consequently unable to withstand its assaults, which

* The spirit of an infant is evidently a power or aggregate of powers, bound or tied in order to be developed during life. This development, however, is from the first moment dependent upon circumstances over which it has no control, such as the place and time of its birth, parents, teachers, position in life, etc., all of which are furnished by divine Providence. The first manifestation, therefore, of independent action on the part of the child, is a necessary consequence partly of the condition of its spirit at the time of birth, and partly of the external circumstances in which it is placed, and will itself exercise a developing influence upon its spirit. A second action must again be dependent upon the condition of its spirit, influenced and developed by the first, and also upon circumstances over which it has no control. This will apply to all subsequent actions during the whole course of man's life, of which, therefore, each is modified by the influence of his preceding actions, and also by the condition of his spirit at the time of birth, and of external circumstances. Now, if this inward condition of the spirit were also *given* by an outward power, as the circumstances under which he acts unquestionably are, or, in other words, if the spirit of the infant were first called into existence by God in the state in which it is at the time of its appearance in the visible world, it would undeniably follow, that the whole series of developments during life must depend solely upon the will of the Creator; in which case man would be only a passive instrument in the hands of Deity, so that all the wrong which he commits would be necessarily done in accordance with God's will, which is an absurdity, since it would make God the author of evil. And if we assume the will of man to be independent of all his other powers, and of the external circumstances which influence him, we fall into still greater difficulties, for the will would in this case also, as an immediate gift of God, be His passive instrument, and, worst of all, it could not be led towards good either by the other powers acting in man, or by his own experience during life. The spirit,

indeed would involve a contradiction; he tells us, on the contrary, that the fall took place during a former spiritual existence, in which, of our own free will, we abused the divine powers which had been entrusted to us; for guilt presupposes free-

therefore, at the time of birth must be the result of a previous existence in a state of freedom, as indeed we may infer from St. Paul's teaching. The powers, which subsequently develop themselves, are all clearly contained in it though bound, and, as it were, in embryo; and it is placed by the Redeemer in the circumstances of life most appropriate to its condition, in order that the evil existing in it by its own fault may be removed, and it may regain freedom. Thus every action of man is his own, the result of his own inward condition, but necessary as considered in its relation to the visible world. This makes it clear why man can suffer pain through his own fault and for his own good, even though it cannot be shown that such fault has been committed in this world; and why the state of man after death must depend upon the condition of his spirit upon leaving this world, and not only upon the agreement between his actions and the law or his conscience. (See page 106). Thus, then, we remove the necessity for assuming a fanciful theory of human freedom, in order to make man accountable for his actions, and so to lay a basis for our ethics. All ethics are based in the eternal order of God, and no one can be happy without living conformably to that order. All deviations from it will inevitably meet their punishment, whether the cause of such deviation lie in man's present or in a former life. The consequences or the punishment of evil, according to its nature, would have been everlasting, because evil left to itself can bring forth nothing but evil; but by the divine redeeming power they have been converted into a means of annihilating evil itself, and of rendering man fit for blessedness. (See page 148.) Unquestionably therefore, all human punishment, if man be actuated by divine principles, should be altogether free from the spirit of revenge for wrongs committed, and proceed exclusively from the earnest desire for the amendment of the criminal.

I have thought it necessary to say thus much in this place upon this most important and difficult matter. The further development of the subject I reserve for another work.

dom. It is true that St. Paul gives us no information respecting this previous spiritual existence, and it remains inexplicable in the present state of our faculties, how a spirit created good, could voluntarily leave the order established by God. But this inquiry lies beyond our sphere. Withdrawn as we are from purely spiritual regions to those of earthly necessity, we cannot possibly account for what took place in the former by means of rules deduced from the experience of our senses or of the visible world, any more than we can re-enter them by our own strength, paralysed as it is by the fall, or by any other means than the gradual recovery of divine strength and inward purity, without which no one can see God. We have, then, gained at least one important point, that, namely, of knowing the reason of our ignorance on this subject.—But what here most concerns us to know is that our original spiritual and divine powers have not been destroyed by the fall, for nothing that is of divine origin can be destroyed,* but that they are only held in bondage by sin. In that state of complete bondage, which had become our na-

* It is worthy of remark here, that Origen also, in comparing the two passages, John xii. 27 and xiii. 21, observes that there is always in Scripture a distinction between *ψυχή*, soul, and *πνεῦμα*, spirit, the former holding an intermediate place, being susceptible of both vice and virtue, while the latter is unsusceptible of evil. Vol. iv. 432. Ed. de la Rue.

tural state, we were altogether powerless for good, unfit for restoration to freedom and happiness, and consequently in need of a Redeemer, who should make the first beginning of our restoration. This redemption could not be accomplished through mere instructions respecting our condition. Our daily experience proves, that whoever has given himself up to a dangerous passion is not to be so freed from it but that manifold appliances added to his own painful experience of the evil consequences of vice, are necessary for its eradication. But training and learning are co-operating agencies of redemption; as might be expected in the case of originally free and rational beings, who cannot be restored to freedom but with the consent and application of their own reason. One who has been long in shackles will require animating encouragement to employ his liberated arm; nor is exhortation less necessary for those of whom we speak. But a power really set free cannot, according to its nature, fail to become an active power. And as on the one hand the help proceeds solely from the redeeming God, and the power in man which has again become active for good is also of divine origin, it is literally true that we have no power for good except from God. On the other hand, this divine power within us being a power vouchsafed to and wholly identified with ourselves, it

is no less true that we are acting of our own accord, and that, therefore, the call: "Work out your own salvation," is no empty sound, but a voice from God, calling forth our own co-operation. Instruction and encouragement are, therefore, absolutely necessary; and Christian ethics and belief so inseparably connected, that their severance is impossible without destroying the vital principle of both.

After this, as it appears to me, necessary digression, we now return to the discourse of the Apostle. His principal object was to show that the region of mercy is essentially different and separated from that of sin and of the law, that the state of mercy is an essentially new state, and that we cannot belong partly to the one and partly to the other. He employs two illustrations taken from life, for the purpose of more clearly elucidating this position, which he evidently considers one of great importance.

15—23. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid! Know ye not that to whomsoever ye yield yourselves servants unto obedience, his servants ye are and ye obey him, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But, thanks be to God, that ye have been the servants of sin but have

- become obedient from the heart, to that pattern of teaching to which ye are delivered.
- 18 Since then ye have been freed from sin, ye have become the servants of righteousness.
- 19 I speak after the manner of men, on account of the weakness of your flesh. As, then, ye had given over your members as servants to impurity and lawlessness, in order to lawlessness, so now give your members to the service of righteousness, in order to holiness.
- 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye
- 21 were free in respect to righteousness. What fruit then had ye at that time? Such as ye are now ashamed of, for their end is death.
- 22 But now that ye are freed from sin and become servants of God, ye have the fruit
- 23 of holiness, whose end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

17. ὅτι ἦτε δούλοι. The Apostle means to say, not only, "Thanks be to God that though once bond servants of sin ye now," etc., but, inasmuch as this bondage was a necessary period of transition, he lays all emphasis on the word "been." Thanks be to God that this time of bondage is *over*.—*ὑπηκούσατε* δέ κ. τ. λ. as well as *ὅν τύπον διδασχῆς περεδοθήτε τούτῳ ὑπηκούσατε ἐκ καρδίας* ye are delivered to the teaching, given to it; this is the external influence; but ye have from the heart, of your own accord, submitted yourselves to the impressions, have received as it were the stamp of the pattern, have become willing subjects of obedience and order, as ye formerly were of disobedience and sin.—19. *ἀνθρώπινον λέγω* I make use of the figures and expressions of common life, in order to make myself intelligible.—*εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν*—*εἰς ἀγιασμόν*, disorder (personified) has that object in view, employs men as instruments for its attainment.

The Apostle's last words were: "Ye are not under the law but under grace." "What then?" he now continues: "Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?" Shall we sin because we have no more to fear the rigour of the law? Are we to relinquish the law that we may sin with impunity? God forbid! Man can never become free from the law until he is free from sin. Sin and the law belong to one and the same condition. Law it is said, was not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous. So long, then, as we remain in the state of unrighteousness we remain subject to the law. Whoever is free from the law must, therefore, be free also from sin, he must have entered into a new state, in which he can no more desire to sin. In order to make the contrast between these two states apparent to the most ordinary understanding, St. Paul personifies, on the one hand, sin or the defection from the divine order—disorder; and, on the other, righteousness, godliness, and order, calling the latter, not without deep significance, obedience unto righteousness, to signify that in this state, lawlessness, arbitrary self-will, or sin, that is, deviation from the divine order, is impossible. For the godly principle is the most perfect order and harmony, and admits of no deviation; and if there is no threatening law, it is only because all who truly belong to this communion carry

the law within themselves. St. Paul then represents sin and the divine order as two masters; and as a slave can have but one master, and must be emancipated before he can enter the service of another, but will then owe no more obedience to his former master, even so man, says the Apostle, belongs to one or the other of these masters. (No one can serve two masters.) But God be thanked that the time has gone by when you were slaves to sin! that you have now from the heart, with free will and from innermost conviction, become obedient to the higher law; that you have recognised in the Gospel a copy of the divine order, by which to remodel yourselves for your salvation. You are discharged from the service of sin and become the servants of righteousness. I use this metaphor, taken from common life, adds the Apostle, because human powers of conception make it difficult to understand truth in the abstract. In fact, this metaphor only applies in so far as it demonstrates that man must have relinquished the service of sin before he can be in communion with God; of a new bondage there is no question, for he who appertaineth to God is not entered into a new bondage. He is free indeed whom the Son maketh free. There can be no real freedom for man but in a life voluntarily conformed to the divine order, which is

eternal because it is of God, and has for its object the highest blessedness of all. Whoever misconceives its true nature, is ignorant of what is best for him and is in darkness and under the dominion of sin. He must necessarily suffer, because the stronger must necessarily prevail. Whoever submits to this highest order by compulsion, is under the law and as yet unfree. Whoever acknowledges it as the object of his most ardent desires, and submits himself to it from conviction and an inward impulse, is in reality free, because he has voluntarily made that order his own, beyond which there is nothing more high and glorious, and which, therefore, cannot be disturbed, for it does not tolerate any heterogeneous element within. As then, the Apostle continues, ye formerly gave up your members to serve disorder and its purposes, so now give up your members to order, to the service of holiness, and your own sanctification. Formerly, when ye were as yet slaves to sin, all your members were in bondage; and the divine order and holiness had no claim upon you as the slaves of another master. And what fruit had ye from the service of such a master? Such as ye now look upon with shame and sorrow. But now ye are free, emancipated from sin! Now ye appertain unto God, and the fruit of this your service is sanctification and life!

It inspires you with a vigour ever young, it gives you true life for evermore. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of grace (not reward) which God gives to His own, out of the fulness of His love, is eternal life, the highest never fading blessedness, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—6. Or know ye not, brethren, (I speak to
you as being acquainted with the law,) that
the law hath power over a man as long as
2 he liveth? So a married woman is bound
by the law to her husband during his life;
but if the husband die she is freed from the
3 law of her husband. Accordingly she shall
be called an adulteress, if she become the
wife of another, while her husband liveth;
but if her husband die she is freed from the
law, so that she is no longer an adulteress,
4 if she become the wife of another. So, my
brethren, have ye also died to the law by
the body of Christ, in order that ye should
become the property of another, of Him who
is risen from the dead, that we may bring
5 forth fruit unto God. For when we were
in the flesh the sinful lusts which were
excited by the law, wrought in our mem-
6 bers to bring forth fruit unto death; but
now, that we are become dead to it, we are

freed from the law which bound us, so that we serve in the new life of the spirit, and not in the old life of the letter.

The Apostle had shown in the last chapter, that those who have entered into the new order of things are no longer under obligation to sin. He now represents this truth to us once more in another form, in order to bring it out more clearly, illustrating, at the same time, his previous assertion that they are also under no further obligation to the law. He had before likened sin to a master, and the human race under its dominion to a slave whom death releases from his servitude. He now compares the relation between the law and man to the relation between a husband and his wife. The analogy does not appear quite complete, as it is not the law that dies but man; we must, therefore, examine more closely wherein the analogy consists. The Apostle speaks of the whole Mosaic law, in so far as it is a coercive impulse from without, acting upon those in whom the divine law has not as yet taken

2 The 2nd verse is not a proof of the proposition contained in the first, but an example in illustration of it. γὰρ is, therefore, not "for," but "so," "yet." Yet a married woman, etc.—5. τὰ διὰ τοῦ νόμου. It will be most in accordance with what follows after verse 7 to supply "*excited*" here. By no means "*originated*." For by the law sin was to be *brought to light*, (ver. 5.) if it could have originated sin which was not actually existing, if only in the germ, it would have been itself sinful.

root, and which must, therefore, cease with the commencement of a new life. This outward law, he says, is binding only during life, and ceases with it. Of this principle, (which we find asserted also in the Talmud,) he could not in its widest application give a universally intelligible example; he confines himself, therefore, to one easily understood, based upon the relation between husband and wife, which the law has fixed for the duration of their lives. If we consider the wife after death in a state in which a new union would be possible, the right to form such a union could not be denied to her, after the former one had been dissolved by death. But as we can have no conception of any such state after death, he uses this example in the first place only to show, that by the death of one party the obligations of both are at an end. In so far as the Apostle has in his mind only the spiritual connection, he may, however, very properly carry the comparison still further, allowing to the wife after her death, or in this case to those who are dead to the law, the right of forming new relations. By death is evidently meant the transition from one state into another totally different, in which the husband and wife are mutually dead to each other; that is to say, one in which they have both ceased to exist for each other. In both examples we find

allusions to new spiritual relations, which the symbolic death brings about, for otherwise, neither could the slave belong to a new master, nor the wife to another husband. As the wife, then, is amenable to the law, if she become the wife of another before death has released her from the marriage bond, so does man expose himself to the penalties of the law if he renounce his obligations to it before he has died to sin, and consequently to the law which exists only in reference to sin. And, as the wife is set at liberty from the law of the husband by death which separates them, so is man by his death to sin set at liberty from the law. To the law, with which you were formerly as intimately connected as a wife with her husband, you are dead through the body of Christ. As Christ died for sin, so have you died with Him and are buried (vi. 5.) through baptism into His death, and thus is the bond dissolved which bound you to the law. By your emersion from baptism you have entered into a new state, in which your previous relations are dead to you as you are dead to them; and in your new state you have become the bride of another, namely, of Christ raised from the dead. And the consequences of this union will be divine, while those of the former were deadly, inasmuch as we belonged during

its continuance to sin, manifesting itself through the law. At that time we were bound and judged by the letter of the law, because we were not then under the dominion of the spirit. But now, being dead to the law, and free from its dominion, we live and serve the spiritual and divine principle in its real essence free from the letter which killeth.

The Apostle had been obliged to speak in apparently derogatory terms of the law. He had said, (vi. 14.) “Sin shall have no more dominion over you, for ye are not under the law,” and in the latter of the two examples he had used the words *sin* and *law* almost as synonymous, declaring that man must die to the law in order to be fully united with Christ. It was necessary therefore to guard against misconceptions; and he does this in the following verses in the most satisfactory and instructive manner, by painting with a few powerful strokes the course of the development of fallen man from his lowest state to the period of the most complete influence of the law upon him.

7—13. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! But I knew not sin otherwise than by means of the law: for I should not have known lust, had not the law said, “Thou shalt not lust.” But sin

took occasion by the commandment and wrought out in me all [manner of] lust; for
 9 without the law sin is dead. Once indeed I lived without law, but when the com-
 10 mandment came sin revived, but I died, and it was found that the law which was
 11 for life, tended for me unto death. For sin took occasion, deceived me by the law, and
 12 by it slew me; so that the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy and just
 13 and good. Has then the good become death to me? In no wise! but sin: in order that sin might be made manifest, as working death to me by means of the good; that sin might, by the commandment, become above measure sinful.

It is now the object of the Apostle to show that the law, against which he had been speaking, and from the dominion of which he had required man to free himself, is nevertheless by no means an evil, but, on the contrary, a most

7 ἐπιθυμία, every sinful inclination.—8 κατεργάσατο, excited and set in motion, drew it into action.—13 It is worthy of remark, that here also θάνατος, death, though opposed to the true life, (as in the 10th verse, ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπέθανον,) evidently does not stand for eternal spiritual death, eternal separation from God, but a transition state, for the Apostle shows in this very place that this death, this manifestation of sin, was a necessary transition, which it was the object of the law to bring about; and further on, that we are redeemed from this state by Christ.

efficacious means in the hand of Providence for making man in the lowest depths of sinfulness aware of his condition and of the causes of his misery, a period of transition through which he must pass in order to reach that higher state of perfection for which he is destined. If the Apostle has proved this, it at once becomes evident why he uses the expressions “to be under sin” and “to be under the law” as synonymous, (vi. 14.) why man must not remain within the region of the law, and why a power widely differing from the law is requisite to transfer him into the region of a higher life and of true felicity.

St. Paul had previously shown that the evil principle in man took its rise from his own transgression, and not of any other being, (v. 12.) so that when he entered this world in the shape of man, he had it already within him, as a constituent part of himself, although it was alien to his original spiritual existence, and objectively considered could never become absolutely identified with him, so that the Apostle is certainly justified in representing sin further on as something foreign to and separable or distinguishable from the individual (vii. 17—20.) He had expressly said that sin existed in the world long before the law; (v. 13.) so that if he now says “without the law sin is dead,” he had no reason to fear being supposed to mean

that no evil would have existed if no law had been given. To say this, would be to stigmatise the law as the first cause of evil, as itself actually sinful, the very contrary of which he maintains. The expression cannot, therefore, mean anything but this: without the law we had no consciousness of sin, it was dead, not recognised as such, we did not know sin, so deeply was it ingrained in our nature, as something alien, opposed to our true nature, and causing our misery. We were so impregnated with sin that we did not recognise it as a foreign element dwelling within us, but were in fact unconscious of its existence. What follows immediately after, makes it still more clear that this is the meaning of the Apostle. He says, "when the commandment came sin *revived*;" which proves that sin had existed before the law, and did not originate at the same time with it. "Once I lived," says St. Paul, "without law," and therefore in such a state as has been described. It was necessary, then, that something should interpose to make me aware of the existence of sin as a heterogeneous element, and this was the law. Without it I should never have recognised the sin which I committed as sin; in my corrupted and lawless state I should never have known that the lusts of the flesh are evil and harmful, if the law had not said "Thou shalt not covet."

The first benefit which the law conferred on man in the state of his lowest degradation, was to raise in him a wholesome conflict, and to make him aware that sin was not absolutely identified with himself. He could not, however, at that time consider the law as other than inimical or opposed to his interests, his abhorrence of all principles of a higher order being such, that the discipline leading towards them appeared to him irksome and hateful. In his perversity he considered the law, and not sin, as the cause of the disquieting sensations within him, and therefore opposed the law. The very fact of the law forbidding certain things, and commanding others, induced him to leave undone what it commanded, and to do what it forbade: sin thus taking occasion by the law to excite his evil propensities, so that through the law sin became manifest and more powerful. Who does not recognise in this picture, the state of man in his lowest degradation. For although this sad picture is literally true in respect to man in his lowest condition, still it cannot surely be maintained that such enmity against the law, and wilful transgression of its dictates is the general and lasting condition of all who are as yet under the law, which would in fact be denying to the law all influence upon the moral progress of man.—When the commandment came,

sin revived, which had, up to that time, been dead; what I had considered as part of my own being, became apparent as having an existence of its own; what had existed in the seed became manifested in the fruit. And I died. The conflict commencing within me, thrilled me with death-pangs; my conscience reproved me, the law condemned me. It appeared then, as though the law, which had been given for my advantage, for life, had had the contrary effect, as though the law had brought death; but it was sin, which had taken occasion by the commandment to incite me to evil, and to destroy me through the law. But if sin has led me astray, then the law is not the cause of my death, or of my wretchedness, but the law is holy, just, and good in all its parts. Can I then say, that the law, which is good, has worked my destruction? God forbid! but sin worked death in me by that which is good. It was necessary that the law should have this effect; I had to go through this painful and deathlike condition, that sin might show itself in its pernicious effects, fatally perverting even that which is good for evil purposes, that sin in its development might become *exceeding sinful* and manifest itself in all its hideousness. The law works *recognition of sin*, it brings to light that sin, which had indeed existed, but was hidden in the bud.—We might compare man, in

his fallen state, in his greatest alienation from God, to one considering himself healthy but carrying within him the germ of some deadly malady; the physician does not allow the latent poison to spread and to destroy the vital powers, he applies his remedies to drive it to the external parts. It is now that the patient first becomes aware of his dangerous condition; he feels sick unto death, and believes himself near death, while at that very moment, in his greatest pain and agony, he is nearer health than before he was conscious of harbouring the germ of a mortal disease.

We have yet to observe that, although St. Paul had probably the Mosaic law more particularly in view, what he says is equally applicable to the law of the conscience or any beneficial human law. The evil-doer resists the warnings of his waking conscience, he struggles against all law which opposes itself to his inordinate desires; but the effect produced by either conscience or the law is one and the same, namely, a wholesome conflict, showing the evil consequences of indulging his passions and preparing him for the ultimate conviction that happiness is to be found only in obedience to order.

We must also avail ourselves of this opportunity to remind our readers how often our judgment is deceived when we consider a person in whom we find some evil passion, which we had

not before noticed, developing itself, as having retrograded or become more vicious. Just as the patient, while the disease within him is being acted upon, seems worse to the inexperienced observer, so he may appear to those, who have no means of judging otherwise than by outward appearances, to have become worse, when in reality he has not. Evil is not *created* by the opportunity which caused its external manifestation; but that which was apparently dead becomes *revived*. If it had not been existing in the germ, complete though undeveloped, no outward influence could have called it into action, any more than the elements could develop the seed without its possessing the capability of life and growth within itself. If this were otherwise, it would not be the seed that contains the first cause of the fruit, but the outwardly acting influences, which are evidently not capable of producing it; and then, to speak with St. Paul, it would not be the inward sinfulness of man but the law that is the cause of evil. The spirit committed to an earthly body in order to its purification requires, in the first place, a certain development of the body, in order to enable it, through its medium, to receive and to reciprocate external influences, and, in the second place, it requires those influences themselves. As long as both these conditions are, to a certain extent,

unfulfilled, we have no means of judging in what manner it will be affected by the external world, so that it is very natural that we should consider the evil as not existing because it has no means of manifesting itself to our view. This is by no means contradicted by the undeniable fact, that a person who gives himself up to vice, will gradually become more proficient in it, and sink deeper and deeper; this is nothing more than a continued development of the evil principle within him.—To obviate, however, all possible misunderstandings and rash conclusions, we must add, first, that every germ does not visibly develop itself, many according to the wise and loving dispensations of God, being never unfolded by the operation of external influences, but removed by more lenient means, such as instruction, example, or education, in the widest sense of the word; for this reason, wise systems of moral and intellectual education are to be numbered among the most efficient means of furthering the kingdom of God; and our exertions for their perfection are certainly to be considered a most sacred duty.—Most undoubtedly every one of us who examines his former life, must admit that many a temptation which has no effect upon him in his present state, would have overpowered and hurried him into evil actions in former days, when his powers of resistance

were weaker. What a motive is here furnished of judging the fallen with indulgence, while filled with a holy abhorrence of evil in itself! We have to adore the goodness of Providence in averting so many dangers to which we should have succumbed, if they had reached us earlier in life; for it was Providence, and not our own precaution which averted them. But we are unable to fathom the plans of the highest wisdom, which, for the wisest and most loving purposes, allowed others to succumb to temptations from which it has graciously preserved ourselves. How do we now understand the full import of the Apostle's warning not to judge others!—In the second place we must observe, that this view does not contain any inducement or excuse for giving a free course to the evil propensities within us. It is fully established by experience, and stands in the closest connection with this view, that sin being at all times productive of misery, we cannot yield to its allurements without having to suffer ills, which we should have escaped if we had withstood them. And further it is evident that he who with equal outward incentives withstands sin, must be in a greater state of purity than he who does not; and as our purity is the measure of our felicity in this life and our blessedness in a future state, all excuses for sinfulness at once fall to the ground; because it is

in reality one and the same thing whether we say : we shall be unhappy because we have sinned ; or, we shall be unhappy because our inward state is such as to make us unfit for happiness.

The doctrine of the Apostle, that the law, in the widest sense of the word, interposed in order to make evil apparent as such, and that sin with all its evil consequences might be made manifest, as also the doctrine of necessity with which it is closely connected, (Comp. page 242,) can only give offence or remain inexplicable, if we suppose that the spirit of man is first created at the time of his appearance on earth. In that case, certainly both the germ of evil and evil itself would be the gift of the Deity, and all the consequences would be nothing but a dire and unavoidable development of His gift. But St. Paul teaches us, that the germ of evil, which man brings with him into the world, and which may be very differently developed according to the preparatory stages, unknown to us, through which each may have passed, is not a work of God, but his own ; and that the work of the redeeming God is its most wise and most merciful development for the annihilation of evil, and the beatification of all who have fallen through their own transgression.

14—25. For we know that the law is spiritual ;

15 but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that
which I practise I know not: for I perform
not that which I wish, but what I hate
16 that I do. If then I do what I wish not, I
17 consent to the law that it is good. But now
it is not I that do this, but sin that dwelleth
18 in me. For I know that in me, that is, in
my flesh, good dwelleth not: for I have
indeed the wish, but I am unable to do what
19 is good. For not the good which I wish, do
I, but the evil which I wish not, that I do.
20 Now if I do that which I myself wish not, it
is not I that do this, but sin that dwelleth in
21 me. I find then this law, that to me, though I
22 wish to do good, evil is near. For I have pleasure
in the law of God after the inner man,
23 but I see another law in my members which
warreth against the law of my mind, and
maketh me a captive under the law, which is
24 in my members. Wretched man that I am!
who shall deliver me from the body of this
25 death? I thank God through Jesus Christ
our Lord! Thus then I myself with my
mind serve the law of God, but with my
flesh the law of sin.

St. Paul had before drawn a picture of man in his most abject condition, in his most complete alienation from God, when the consciousness of

his true self was so completely destroyed by sinfulness, that he was incapable of distinguishing sin, which had become identified with his own being to such a degree that he did not consider himself a slave to sin, but imagined himself to be acting while sin was acting through him. The Apostle had then shown, how man under the influence of the law learns by degrees to distinguish himself from sin, becomes aware of its calamitous consequences, at the same time acknowledging himself to be under its dominion, and obliged to yield, although he feels that it is leading him into unspeakable misery. He feels himself encompassed by sin, powerless, annihilated, dead, like one lying rigid in his coffin, apparently dead, but conscious of life, yet unable to give any sign of it, and compelled to allow himself to be treated as a corpse. This state, however, which St. Paul also calls death, is not that which leads immediately to life, it is, as it were, a crisis which must precede it. Through spiritual baptism, of which St. Paul has spoken in the beginning of the sixth chapter, man must actually die to sin, in order to feel himself in a new existence released from its dominion and capable of beginning his true life. The consciousness of this new birth and of spiritual life, is presupposed in the picture drawn by St. Paul of the

state of those without the law, and in that which he now draws, to the end of the chapter, of those in whom the consciousness of their true selves, in contradistinction to sin, has gained life, and who yet feel themselves compelled to yield to its dominion, and thus unable to comprehend their own position. Those only can fully comprehend the real nature of this condition who are no longer in it, and who are able to contemplate, as it were, from a more exalted position, their past history and the course which they have run. This is highly important, in order to understand the Apostle's meaning, as it would else be difficult to see why St. Paul, (who in order to give more life to his discourse, speaks in the person of one in this state,) should attribute to him so intimate a knowledge of the spiritual condition and its causes, as such a one could not possibly possess. We must take care not to press the idea of death too far in this simile, for the man who is described as acting, although he acts with the consciousness of his servitude and of the annihilation of his own self, is nevertheless living and acting in the external world.

We, continues the Apostle, who are initiated into the plan of salvation and have attained life, know that the law is spiritual, that it tends to a higher divine order of things; but I, that is man

whose condition is here depicted, am carnal, sold under sin, a slave to sin. Hence the conflict between him and the spiritual law which urges him on towards a higher order of things, to which he has become and remains yet a stranger, although he belongs to it agreeably to his original nature; hence this, to him, unaccountable conflict and perturbation of mind. That which he does, which he performs as the slave of a strange master, he does not acknowledge as his own act. Without his own will, without consciousness he executes the orders of a stranger, knows not what he accomplishes through himself, feels only the discrepancy between this coercion and his former free state, of which a faint recollection is reviving within him. He does not do what he would; the strange dominion is so powerful within him, that he does what he hates. This may be understood in two ways. The Apostle either takes the will for the original, free, energetic tendency of the spirit, which according to its nature is directed to good, but which, in the state he describes being as yet fettered and unable to act, manifests itself only by a sensation of uneasiness and conflict. In this case, the sense would be: the actions of such a person are at variance with his original and true being. Or else he understands by "will" an undefined powerless desiring or wishing, which cannot manifest

itself by deeds, because it is opposed by other counteracting or impeding powers, because the energetic tendency of his spirit, his real will, is wanting.* In this latter case the Apostle would mean: such a person would desire what is good, he feels that it would render him happier, but yet his evil desires and propensities retain the upper hand, although he knows them to be hurtful and even hateful, and is sure they will produce loathing and remorse. The latter explanation appears to me the correct one; for unless we consider St. Paul as unnecessarily repeating, from the 18th to the 21st verse, what he had already said, we must assume that he is expressing from the 15th to the 18th verse, the opinion of man upon his own condition, and that, from the 18th verse, he gives the explanation of this state from a higher standing-point. Such a man, if he reflects upon himself, would say, I know not what I do nor how I come to do it; what I should wish to do, I do not, but what I dislike and disapprove of, that I do. I must admit then, that the law is good, because it admonishes me to do what I must acknowledge to be good; but the power of my evil and sinful passions is such, that I cannot but obey them.—Now follows the

* It is a pity that we have no word in our language to express this wavering feeble kind of will. The schoolmen coined the word *velleitas* for it, which is retained in the French *velléité*.

explanation of the cause of this condition from a higher standing-point. We know from the teaching of the Apostle, that the spirit of man, which proceeded pure and good from the hand of the Creator, has sunk through the fall into sensuality, that spiritual man has become carnal. And this in fact explains at once the cause of the twofold nature of man, the one inward, pure, spiritual, the other outward, sinful carnal; and St. Paul needs only to refer to our own experience for confirmation. I know, he says, that good dwelleth not in carnal man, that is, in so far as he is a being subjected to sinfulness and to the flesh. He possesses his material body, subject to death only because he has become sinful, on which account that which is good cannot dwell in this body, nor in any other which does not belong essentially to his originally pure spirit; it dwells alone in his spirit as it was first called into existence. The condition of man, as his spiritual nature begins again to manifest itself, proves this, as it is only thus that this state becomes intelligible. An acknowledgment of good, and a desire to possess it, is apparent, but it amounts to no more than a mere powerless desire. He would prefer doing good, if it were possible without a sacrifice of his favourite propensities and habits; but against his better conviction and powerless

desire he is compelled to do what he considers wrong; he is not himself the cause of his acting, but sin that dwells within him. This explains the rule, the law of his present mixed nature; he would do good, but evil acting as a clog or an insurmountable hindrance, prevents the execution of his desires. His inward being, his real spiritual self, has pleasure in the divine order of things, and feels that happiness is only to be found therein; but a hostile power, the law in his members, the power of sin wars within him against the higher law, and is as yet more powerful than the powers arrayed on the side of the divine principle; it exercises a dominion over him, which is the more degrading, since he has become conscious of his bondage. "O wretched man that I am!" exclaims the Apostle, who feels the miserable condition of the unhappy beings as intensely as if it were his own, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death," from the deadly misery in which I am held by the body of sin? (vi 6.) He then interrupts himself, as it were, with a thanksgiving to God through Christ, who in reality has already accomplished the salvation not of himself only, but of all men; and then concludes, as the result of the whole investigation, with the words: "So then with the mind man serves the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

An additional proof of our having rightly understood the Apostle's meaning, appears to be furnished by the fact, that having, in the last words, pointed out the state of those who have experienced the effect of the law upon themselves, he proceeds at once to take a more elevated view, in speaking of himself and of those above the law. Had it been his intention to sketch the general progress of fallen man to perfection, he would have shown, how, on his becoming painfully conscious of his own misery, the helping hand of the Saviour was extended to him, how he had been led to the feet of the Redeemer and united with him by spiritual baptism, and how he then felt himself freed from the fetters of sin. Had he intended to describe his own gradual progress—as might be supposed from his using the first person and a past tense while speaking of those without the law, and the present tense when depicting the conflict under the law—he would, as one who felt himself in such intimate communion with Christ, have told us the wondrous ways by which he arrived at this point. He speaks of himself in the 2nd verse of the second chapter, as in a state of freedom from sin; he could not therefore mean to represent himself as still under the law, since he could not belong at the same time to both these states, which he so widely distinguishes from each other. Still less could

he mean to depict the course of his own life as the man Paul, for of himself he could not say, that he had been once without law, since he tells us in another place (Acts xxii. 3) that he was born of Jewish parents, and consequently under the law, and (Acts xxiii. 1, and xxiv. 16) that he had lived in all good conscience before God, and consequently according to the law, until that day.

His object was, therefore, to show that the law is good and holy, but that it has power only to conduct us to a certain point and no further. He breaks off as soon as he has proved this, having spoken in his own person merely for the purpose of giving force and animation to his discourse.

And yet he sets forth at the same time, though this was not his principal object, the history of his own spiritual life, and that of all human spirits, in its leading features; not, however, the history of one particular human life. He distinguishes three different stages in the progress of man; the first, that of lawlessness or enmity with God and godliness; the second, that of coercion under the law; and the third, that of freedom from law and sin. Every fallen spirit has to be conducted through these three different stages; but they are not all traceable in every individual life. For there are most undoubtedly men who enter

this world in a state of lawlessness, and who at the time of their death have not, as far as we can see, left that state or entered into that of a wholesome conflict within themselves, that is acknowledgment of the law. On the other hand, there are also men who from their first development, notwithstanding a certain admixture of sinfulness from which no one is perfectly free while he inhabits this world, have yet so marked a tendency to godliness, that they cannot at any moment of their lives be numbered among the enemies of God, but must, on the contrary, from their first appearance in this world be accounted His friends. As it is certain that those in the lowest state of degradation cannot have proceeded from the hands of the Creator in that state, since it is impossible that God should have created them His enemies, and St. Paul has taught us that each individual has fallen through his own fault; while, on the other hand, no one can have reached that higher state of moral worth in which he begins his present life otherwise than through the redeeming power of God, and there is only one Redeemer for all: it follows, that all who from their very birth display a certain degree of moral excellence, must have attained it, through the redeeming power, in a former period of their existence, be it that they have gone through a preparatory training in a former ante-human

existence, or in a former life as men in this world. (Comp. p. 188.)

It is well known that the belief in a return to human existence, was prevalent among many of the nations of antiquity. Even in the Bible we find traces of it. It was, for instance, generally believed that Elijah was to return in the shape of man before the appearance of the Messiah. The opinion expressed by many, that Christ was Elijah, or John the Baptist, or one of the Prophets, is indicative of a widely spread belief in a return to life after death, as it would else be inexplicable that such an opinion concerning Christ should have been expressed at all. Christ himself does not expressly teach such a return; His words: "I tell you that Elias has already come," may be understood to mean, that John the Baptist was similar in appearance to Elijah, or in the influence he exercised. Yet they may also be understood literally to mean that the spirit of Elijah had again entered the world in the person of the Baptist, and, at all events, Christ could not have held this opinion to be a hurtful error; He would not else have missed the opportunity of correcting it.

What we have said further back of the belief in pre-existence is, however, applicable to this subject also, with which it is intimately connected. A positive belief of it is by no means

necessary for an insight into Christianity in its innermost depths. It is, on the contrary, a glorious privilege of Christianity that it may be apprehended and applied independently of all speculation. But what we have concluded from the teaching of St. Paul, is of the greatest importance for all who have at heart the attainment of worthy and exalted conceptions of the world. (*Weltansicht*.) It renders intelligible much that we have already had under consideration, and will throw a light on much that has yet to follow, chiefly on the passage ix. 1—18. It points out to us one of the chief causes of the difference in the characters of men, and at the same time, accounts for the diversity of the circumstances and relations in which they are placed by Providence, for the one great purpose of salvation. Although it may always remain inexplicable to the human understanding, why one is further advanced and apparently more favoured than another, we can yet imagine, (and this in direct proportion to the truth and correctness of our views respecting free-will, which even on our path to salvation remains unrestricted,) that spiritual beings so different from each other cannot, without compulsion, be led to their true happiness except by the most different means. So, then, the impartiality and love of God remain the same for all, notwithstanding outward

appearances, for although St. Paul distinguishes only three principal states of man, it is more than probable that there may be in each of them different grades, perhaps from causes altogether unaccountable to us. We should also recollect, as we have before stated, that these different states, although none belong essentially to more than one of them at a time, are yet not so completely separated from each other, that upon the transition from the one into the other, all traces of the former disappear at once. It is conceivable that the effect of the redeeming power may be so different upon different men belonging to the same class, (whether they have belonged to it from their birth, or have entered it during their life in this world,) that one may carry more than another of his preceding condition into the new state. St. Paul himself gives us a hint on this subject, inasmuch as in the later chapters of this Epistle he admonishes the strong in faith to treat with love and forbearance the weak in faith, who as yet adhere to certain observances of the law, and are therefore to a certain extent still under the law, but whom he nevertheless looks upon as true brethren. And even the circumstance of the strong in faith requiring such an admonition, proves that St. Paul did not consider them to have reached as yet the perfection of

love and spiritual freedom, as otherwise such an admonition would have been superfluous.

We must not omit to notice as a further consequence from what has been said, that we cannot expect to be conscious of the moment in which we have made the transition into a more advanced state, if we have really made it. Still less may we allow ourselves to judge others in this respect. We have in no case the right to judge others, or to withdraw from them the benefit of our instruction and example under the plea that they may not as yet be in a condition to profit by them, for we have no means of knowing how far any one may have advanced, notwithstanding appearances. The state of man's mind is known to God alone, and is often too closely shrouded for human observation. His preparatory training may have been so secret and imperceptible, that what may appear to us a giant stride or a sudden transformation, may in the eye of a truly spiritual observer, be but a regular and gradual development. Were we able to take a really spiritual survey of the minds of men, how often should we have to blush at the erroneous judgments that we form, misled by outward appearances! But as to our own state we may feel the more confident the more we know that love towards God and to our brethren has gained life within us; and even if we continue

to make the painful experience that there are traces left within us of our previous condition, we shall not lose our peace of mind notwithstanding, but retain the blessed conviction that they will vanish by degrees, and that no real evil can befall us, led as we are by the hand of our Lord and Saviour!

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—11. There is now therefore no condemnation for them which are in Jesus Christ.*
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of
3 sin and death. For, (which was impossible to the law because it was made powerless through the flesh,) God, by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for
4 sin, destroyed sin in the flesh; that the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after
5 the Spirit. For they that are according to the flesh, strive after that which is carnal, but they that are according to the Spirit strive
6 after that which is spiritual. But the striving of the flesh is death, but that of the
7 spirit is life and peace, inasmuch as the striving of the flesh is enmity against God: for it doth not submit itself to the law of

* The ordinary text has, "which walk not after the flesh but after the spirit," an addition which is not found in many of the manuscripts, and is by no means essential.

8 God, neither indeed can it. They then that
 9 belong to the flesh cannot please God. But
 ye belong not to the flesh, but to the spirit,
 if at least the Spirit of God dwelleth in
 you. But he who hath not the Spirit of
 10 Christ, is not His. But if Christ is in
 you, the body indeed is dead on account of
 sin, but the spirit is life on account of
 11 righteousness. Now if the Spirit of Him
 who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwel-
 leth in you, He who raised up Christ from
 the dead will also quicken your mortal
 bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you.

After having demonstrated the object and the excellence as well as the limits of the outward law, St. Paul now arrives at the joyful conclusion: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus," for them who are most intimately united with Him; because a power above the law, a law of a higher order, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has

1 *κατάκριμα* can be taken as "a sentence of condemnation spoken by the law," which is no more to be feared by those who are freed from the law; or, as "an actually fulfilled sentence," the misery which came upon the fallen through the fall, but which is removed by the reinstatement. (v. 16.)—3 *κατέκρινε τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί*. "condemned sin in the flesh." He pronounced the sentence of death and annihilation over the evil principle in man, over the law of sin and death.—4 *δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου*, the full rights, claims and requirements of the law.—11 *θνητός* might here also be very well translated by defunct, dead. (See my interpretation.)

made them free from the law of sin and death. In order fully to comprehend the course of the Apostle's thoughts, it will be necessary to examine the different meanings in which he uses the word *law*. In the 22nd verse of the seventh chapter he had spoken of one delighting, after the inward man, in the law of God, that is, in the spiritual law of the higher order to which he essentially belongs, but that another law in the members, the law of sin and death, wars against that higher order. He now speaks of a law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes us free from the law of sin and death, and at the same time also from the outward law, to which we were subject so long as we remained under the law of sin. This spiritual law of life in Christ Jesus is that redeeming power of Christ which begins to operate when the efficacy of the outward law ceases. The outward law, although also of divine origin, could not according to its nature lead to freedom; threats, promises, and other outward incentives were too weak to cope with the power of the law of sin; they were paralysed by it and unable to subdue it. A power of a higher order was, therefore, needed to accomplish what the outward law was unable to effect, namely, the extinction of the law of sin, and the annihilation of the principle of evil within us, or of the body of sin. In

order, then, that after overcoming all resistance, the spiritual law might manifest itself in its whole efficacy, and man might agreeably to his original nature again live a godly life, it was necessary that God should send Him into the world in the semblance of sinful man, who is called the Son of God, in a sense infinitely higher and more glorious than any in which the name has ever been applied, either before or after Him.

The Apostle adverts here to the greatest mystery of redeeming love, and well may we ask, how we may approach with becoming reverence this most sublime of all subjects. There is, however, an immeasurable difference between the humble and religious desire to search in the purest and best way of which our powers admit, for the deep sense of all that revelation offers us, and an inquisitive prying into that which must ever remain impenetrable to human reason.

If we consider the important doctrine, for which we are indebted to the intimation of the Apostle, of the free and blissful state of the world of spirits, as created by God, and before their inward law was opposed by a law in the members, and of their fall through a voluntary deviation from the divine order, which was alone able to secure bliss and felicity—if we consider this doctrine together with the sublime truth

which St. John communicates as a revelation from Christ Himself, that "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness," (1 John i. 5,) we must needs feel convinced that between the God of light and the world of darkness there can be no immediate communion. At the same time, however, we feel that because there still remains in the fallen race a divine spark, which cannot be extinguished because of its being divine; the God of love could not leave in misery those who are His offspring, and we have from experience the blissful conviction that He has not left us without His aids. (Compare page 245.) But *how* the union was brought about between these conflicting extremes, is shrouded in impenetrable mystery. A mediating principle must have intervened, and this mediating principle could be none but God; but not God in that holiness and glorious light, before whom nothing that is unholy or obscured can stand. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) The Eternal One and Indivisible God produced, as it were, a division or separation within Himself, leaving behind, as it were, the brightness, the consuming fire of His holiness, divesting Himself of the glory which the darkened beings could not have endured, and allowing the beams of mercy to prevail in Christ our Redeemer. To Him, the All-wise, All-merciful, and All-loving, God surrendered

the fallen world, to organise disorder, to loosen the bound, to conduct the lost to freedom and felicity, that He might reign until all His enemies, subdued by love, should be laid at His feet, and He should then restore the dominion to the Father, that God may be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.)—But the great general work of redemption comprehended a particular one, far transcending all human conceptions; and to this the Apostle alludes. It was necessary for Christ Himself to appear in the visible world, in the shape of sinful flesh. The human mind, not yet lost in the depths of divine love, may here ask: Why could not the redeeming God accomplish the great work as He had conducted it before His incarnation, without the visible appearance of the Redeemer? Why could He not, if the world required revelations of a higher order, endow human beings with understanding, power, and wisdom to make them? But who does not feel the presumption of such a question, the mad presumption of a human understanding, which would dare, in the condition of a fallen, sinful, and darkened being, to scrutinize and sit in judgment upon the plans of Eternal Wisdom? Who can doubt for an instant, that the human race has derived immeasurable benefits from the visible appearance of Christ on earth? He it was who displayed the highest dignity of which

human nature is capable, in its ideal glory; through Him we have become assured that it is not human greatness, wisdom, or power, but love alone, obedient, self-sacrificing love, voluntarily submitting to the most ignominious death, that overcomes the world. He it is in whom we have an example which makes all other examples unnecessary, a teacher bearing within Himself the fulness of divine wisdom, so that we have no need of further instructions; one who displayed the character of the divine proceedings so visibly before us, that He was justified in saying of Himself: "Whoever sees me sees the Father." Who can doubt these blessings and the powerful efficacy of the revelation of Christ's death and resurrection? And whoever is gratefully convinced of them, must needs exclaim with St. Peter: "Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God," and may apply to himself Christ's answer: "Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but the Father in heaven." Penetrated with these convictions, no one will require proofs of the necessity of Christ's appearance on earth; he will know through the same revelation, that whatever is accomplished according to the plans of divine wisdom is accomplished by the means which are both indispensable and all-wise.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

states, in a figurative but beautiful and touching manner adapted to the faculties of those for whom he was more immediately writing, *one* of the reasons for Christ's incomprehensible condescension. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 17, 18.) He who in His holiness, in His light which knows nothing that is obscure, could have no conception of sin and human weakness, had to lower Himself to humanity, to take cognisance, as it were, of evil and weakness, in order that He might assist the weak and destroy evil. It is a figure which must not be pressed too far, but how expressive and touching a figure! St. Paul states, as the effect of the appearance of Christ, that God condemned sin in the flesh, pronounced the sentence of death and annihilation (*κατέκρινε*) upon sin which had taken possession of man, dwelt and reigned in his members, and had encompassed him with the body of death. Through this sentence of annihilation upon sin, the like sentence passed before upon the fallen spirits as an unavoidable consequence of their fall, was revoked, so that now there is no more condemnation to

them which are in Christ Jesus. Through this divine interference was accomplished, what the law had begun but was not able to accomplish, because sin as yet living in the flesh opposed its influence. This, St. Paul continues, was done that the highest demands of the law might be satisfied in us who live according to the spirit and not according to the flesh. The law means righteousness; the highest divine law of which the Apostle here speaks means, consequently, the highest divine righteousness, and this, as we have been already told in the third chapter, manifests itself in the Christian economy as the removal of the hindrances which prevented our happiness, as the annihilation of evil itself. Thus then the Apostle declares, that for the purpose of this annihilation of evil, the appearance of Christ Himself on earth was required and that through its abiding influence upon those who live according to the spirit, the highest demand of divine righteousness or, as we should say, of divine mercy, is fulfilled. And when we experience the blessed effects of this great fact within ourselves, through the restoration of our inward peace, and feel ourselves released from the body of sin, (vii. 24,) a release for which we have sighed so long, and often, perhaps, unconsciously to ourselves; is it possible then, that forgetting what we are in our present condition, and that

we have nothing but what we have received through grace, we should expect, by our own powers, to fathom the mystery, why God redeems us by these means, or require that He should instruct us in human fashion on a subject which necessarily transcends all human power of comprehension? Can we, who do not even understand how evil took its origin within us, expect to understand the means which God uses for destroying it? Can we, who do not even comprehend how the elements of disease are destroyed in our bodies by counteracting remedies, expect to comprehend the inward nature of the most spiritual of all influences?

A vain and indiscreet desire to draw the most spiritual divine act down to the level of the human understanding, appears to me to have had at least a share in establishing the doctrine, that it was needful for Christ to become Man in order to die the death of atonement, and that His death was requisite to propitiate an offended God or to satisfy the divine justice, which absolutely required punishment for guilt, and inflicted it upon the Innocent who voluntarily offered Himself, instead of inflicting it upon the guilty. Instead of adoring with St. Paul the justice of God as a power to render us fit for blessedness by annihilating sin, we thus degrade it even below the level of the justice of any noble-minded

human being. Who would attempt to vindicate the noble-mindedness of any man, whose anger was only to be appeased by blood, and that, innocent blood? And what does even the understanding gain by such an explanation at the expense of our better feelings? Is it possible that the sinfulness of man should be annihilated by the death of the innocent, or is it possible that man in a state of sinfulness should be fit for the enjoyment of the eternal bliss of heaven?

Let us, who have the fruits of the redemption of Christ within ourselves through peace with God, enjoy the great and blessed gift, without attempting to analyse it by reason. We cannot but glorify the human appearance of Christ as a necessary part of His whole work of redemption; we cannot but glorify His death, not only because it was a necessary consequence of His appearance on earth, but also because we feel it to be the most important moment of His great work, of which, according to the mysterious representation of the Scripture, not only the spiritual world, but all Nature felt the mighty influence—because all Nature requires and awaits redemption, (viii. 19—22,) which they who communicate the great event express most significantly, by an eclipse of the sun and an earthquake. Let us glorify this great act in the only way worthy of the God of Love, and

its blessed consequences to all past and future generations!

After saying: "He condemned sin in the flesh, that the demand of the law might be satisfied," St. Paul adds very significantly, "in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." This shows us in the first place, that the highest effects of redemption become apparent in those only who have entered the spiritual life; and also in the second place, that during this spiritual life these effects are continued and completed. And there is much comfort in this, for it shows us that with an earnest and preponderating tendency to godliness, we may live a spiritual life, notwithstanding the imperfections from which it is only in such a state, and through the complete annihilation of sin in the flesh, that we can be completely released. After all that has been before stated on the subject, it need hardly be said, that although the work of God through Christ "He condemned sin in the flesh" is represented as a fact already accomplished, (as, objectively considered, it really is,) yet in each individual this work is exhibited as still accomplishing in the development of time. It is on this account that the Apostle distinguishes the two states, not by what is actually accomplished in them, but by the tendency and earnest aspirations which mark them. "They that are after the

flesh do mind the things of the flesh," mind that which is earthly and sinful, which leads to death; their aims are opposed to godliness and to the divine order, which is the condition of the happiness of all, and cannot, therefore, be pleasing in the sight of God. The spiritually-minded, on the contrary, strive after what is spiritual and godly, after true life and inward peace, and desire to enter into that order in which alone life and peace can be enjoyed. Measure yourselves therefore, the Apostle would say, by this measure. If the Spirit of God manifests itself within you by this yearning towards the spiritual, then are you spiritual; if not, then are you not really united with Christ. But if you are, if Christ lives within you, then although your body is dead as a consequence of sin—St. Paul does not say your body will die, but is dead being a production of sin—yet the Spirit is life, not shall attain life, but has actually attained it through the perfecting righteousness of God. This Spirit is the Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, and if it lives in you, His influence must needs quicken your mortal bodies.—I believe this passsge would be sadly misunderstood, if it were considered as confined to a future universal resurrection. The grossly material elements of the body, St. Paul has declared to pertain to sin, and consequently as essentially

dead, unfit for a future life. He also tells us in the second part of the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that it is not the material body which is put into the grave that shall be raised, but the spiritual body, the *vehiculum* of the spirit, without which no spirit can be imagined. This spiritual body, which must attain to life if the spirit is to enjoy its independent existence and exert any influence upon others, had been obscured or shackled by sin, powerless, miserable, and mortal, nay more, it was dead, utterly dispossessed of life and of action. But it shall be quickened through the Spirit of God dwelling within you. The work of this quickening Spirit is to release what was bound, to illumine what was darkened, to resuscitate what was dead; and this is accomplished by breaking the shackles, by removing what obstructed the entrance of light, destroying the body of sin, and sin itself in the body. As the diseased frame does not become healthful by the removal of the cause of disease to another part, but only by its annihilation, so is our spiritual body to be restored through the destruction of the cause of disease, by the destruction of sin and its productions, so that the spirit may again enjoy its restored, youthful and vigorous existence. As then the effects of the death of Christ take root within us, and the ungodly principle within us is destroyed,

the quickening divine Spirit manifests its power within us, and effects our true spiritual resurrection, which is perfection!

12—17. Therefore, brethren, we are not under obligation to the flesh to live after the
 13 flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye must die: but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the works of the flesh, ye shall live.
 14 For they who are led by the Spirit of God, are sons of God. But ye have not received a spirit of bondage, that ye should again
 15 fear; but ye have received the spirit of sonship, in which we cry, Abba, Father! The Spirit itself testifieth to our spirit, that we
 16 are children of God: but if children, then heirs also; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; although we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified with Him.

The Apostle had said, that those who have entered into the state of grace and peace, have altogether left behind them the realm of sin and of law. After having carefully reviewed this important proposition, and secured it against all possible exceptions, he now repeats it once more

13 *πράξεις τοῦ σώματος*, all that sin accomplishes through the instrumentality of the body of sin; the influence of sin on and through the body.—16 *συμμαρτυρεῖ* is to be taken in its simplest sense. What is here spoken of is a testimony which our spirit

as a direct conclusion from his preceding arguments. Therefore we are in no way debtors to the flesh, to that which is earthly, it has no further claim upon us, we are altogether released from our servitude. Being now obedient servants of the divine law, we are no more under the dominion of our former master, because we cannot serve two masters. Either you obey the former master, which will appear by your living according to the flesh, by your propensities being earthly, and “the end of those things is death.” (vi 21.) Or else you belong to the divine order of things, your tendencies will be towards godliness, and this will appear by your restored originally divine powers opposing the will of your former master, and overcoming his yet remaining influence by the spirit; and in that case you have your fruit unto holiness and everlasting life. For they who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, they are no more servants who know not what their

receives—not a testimony among others, which might receive confirmation from it: all other proofs sink into insignificance in the presence of the Holy Spirit.—17 *εἴπερ* cannot be here taken as conditional “provided that,” for the state which is here spoken of by the Apostle excludes all doubt. We are co-heirs, *although* we must suffer with Him. The suffering with Him, which is the necessary accompaniment of our being glorified with Him, ought not to make us waver in faith. Comp. 1 Cor. viii. 5. καὶ γὰρ *εἴπερ* εἰσὶ λεγόμενοι Θεοί, for although there are so-called gods. *εἴπερ* is used also by profane writers in the sense of καὶ *εἰ*, *even though*.

master doeth, but sons who are consciously executing the will of their Father. This spirit is not the spirit of bondage again to make you fear, it is the spirit of adoption which shows you God, whom you formerly dreaded, as a loving Father. With this spirit you will approach the Father with joyous confidence. It is the immediate witnessing of the divine Spirit within us, which proves to us in the most positive and direct manner, that we are children of God, rendering all further proof unnecessary. (Comp. 2 Cor. i. 22.)* And with this lively intuitive conviction, we have also the certainty of eternal blessedness, for if children of God we are also heirs. Fulfilled, then, will be the great promise of Him who despised not to become our Brother, and who said: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) Of

* It is an immediate witnessing of the divine Spirit in and to our spirit, that gives us the most positive assurance of our having re-entered into blissful relation with God. The assurance of this, as well as of all other divine truths thus acquired, furnishes at the same time an unquestionable proof of our living in the world of spirits even during our present life, for this manner of attaining such assurance would otherwise be impossible; and it is for this reason that the divine witnessing makes all other proof, such as demonstrations of the understanding, which may be useful considered as preparatory steps, altogether unnecessary as soon as we have become capable of apprehending the immediate witnessing of the divine Spirit within us.

our participation in His glory we are even now certain, although we shall yet have to suffer tribulation and anguish in many ways, which we now recognise as preparatory steps to that glorious consummation. (v. 3—5.)

18—23. For I am convinced that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be named, in comparison with the glory
 19 which is to be revealed in us. For the yearning expectation of creation waiteth
 20 for the revelation of the sons of God. For creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but through Him who hath subjected
 21 it unto hope. For it also, creation, shall be delivered from the bondage of destruction and attain to the glorious liberty of
 22 the children of God. For we know that the whole creation sigheth and groaneth
 23 together until now. And not it alone, but also they who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, and we ourselves groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the redemption of our body.

18 λογίζομαι, see iii. 28. ἄξιος for λόγου ἄξιος (worthy of note) even in classical writers.—19 κτίσις. It is well known that many significations have been assigned to this word. They are given with sufficient fulness in Dr. Thulock's commentary. I have not myself the slightest doubt that the Apostle, according to the simplest and most ordinary signification of the word, means by it

The Apostle had said that we have the certainty of being children of God, even in our tribulations and sufferings. The condition of the

in this place, the whole of Nature. No further proofs of this can be given, than such as occur to every one from his own sense of the connection of the passage, as well as from the Apostle's whole theory. For from the fact that, according to the Jewish doctrine, all nature is represented as involved in the fall, and in expectation of a total renovation in the Messiah's kingdom, I should draw no conclusion if I did not meet with the same representation also in the writings of St. Paul, a Christian Apostle. It depends upon the idea we form of *κτίσις* whom we are to understand by *τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες* in the 23rd verse.—20 *ἐπ' ἐλπίδι* belongs to the preceding clause. For that the subjection of Nature to vanity, should tend to her redemption, was not hope in the case of Him who subjected Nature, but full certainty. It was hope in the case of Nature, (here personified,) as indeed the Apostle himself says, in the 24th verse, of those who already experience the highest effects of redemption, so far as is possible in this life, that they are saved *in hope*.—23 By *τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες* (They who have received the first fruits of the Spirit.) I do not understand, as many do, the Apostles, the most perfected in Christianity, but those who actually possess the first fruits of the Spirit, who have received the true baptism, but as yet are only beginners. (Compare v. 2.) The climax seems to demand this, since the Apostle names, in the first place, Nature, and *last* of all the most advanced, himself included. What motive could the Apostle have for not associating himself, in this place, with the other Apostles? It would have been false shame; and that was foreign to his nature. It is true that he once calls himself, as if in a paroxysm of pain, the least of the Apostles, (1 Cor. xv. 8—10.) but in quiet discourse, *e.g.* in all the introductions to his epistles, he expresses the full consciousness of his Apostolic dignity, which he could not fail to be possessed with if he were what he was, and if he were to effect what he did effect; and once, on the occasion of his Apostolic dignity being impugned, he vindicates most plainly his title to perfect equality with the highest Apostles. (2 Cor. xi. 5.) Indeed, the whole sense of the passage seems to me to demand this interpretation. See the following exposition. *Ἀπαρχή* means the first fruits which were offered in sacrifice, not on that account the *best*, though the

fallen beings required that even Christ Himself should not return otherwise than through sufferings to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was; (John xvii. 5;) our own condition therefore, most assuredly requires that we should be conducted to purity and blessedness through sufferings, which even the all-merciful God cannot forbear to inflict, because there is no other way by which we can be perfected. And now the Apostle exalts his view to the boundless felicity which awaits us in the state of our perfection. In ecstasy he exclaims, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be named, in comparison with the glory which is to be revealed in us." All things, the whole creation, will be renewed, will be happy and free in that glorious kingdom! At present all is, as yet, in a state of anxious, longing expectation. All Nature groans and hopes for the restoration of the sons of God, which will bring with it her own restoration. The creation, which was once the sphere of action for pure and free spirits, itself spiritual (for nothing but what is

best of them were selected for the purpose of sacrifice. Here too the notion of sacrifice is not brought in, for the men who are here spoken of are not themselves called ἀπαρχή but it is said of them, that they *have* the ἀπαρχή. Thus (in xvi. 5.) ἀπαρχή is used of the first, or one of the first, who went over to Christianity, but clearly not one of the most advanced, an Apostle. In the same way the word signifies the first in order of time, 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23; xvi. 15.

spiritual can emanate from God, who is a Spirit) and once, in a manner incomprehensible to our obscured intellect, intimately connected and in mutual relation with the pure spirits, whose organ it was, must necessarily have been drawn into the fall of those spirits. (It would be folly to inquire whether Nature which is here represented as endowed with sense, participated in the fall with or without coercion? Nothing that is endowed with sense can suffer by the divine will without guilt, or otherwise than for its own benefit unto hope, as St. Paul expresses it. But how can we possibly form any idea of the original condition of Nature and of the manner of her connection with the spirits which we now call human spirits?) Nature herself was after the fall subjected by the Restorer and Redeemer of all things to the laws which she now obeys, and which, although beneficial and restorative, yet spiritually considered, belong to a condition of perishableness and to a period of transition, and must have an end when their object is accomplished. Nature cannot have subjected herself voluntarily to the dominion of the laws which she now obeys, she must have been coerced by the loving wisdom of the Redeemer, whose object she was incapable of comprehending, and who subjected her in hope. With respect to the Redeemer, however, it was

not hope that His plans would become a blessing for all; with Him it was a glorious certainty. But hope was the gift of God to the whole creation, and this hope and longing it still expresses. Who will not be struck by the deep truth of this representation? Does not all Nature impress us with a feeling of relationship? and could our bodies have been moulded from the same elements, and vibrate every moment to her most secret influences, if no such relationship existed? And is not the creation which surrounds us, with its impenetrable masses, its destructive earthquakes and hurricanes, much more intelligible even to our understanding, if we look upon nature as struggling and travailing in pain, as St. Paul expresses it, than if we consider it in a state of perfection, or in its present condition as an immediate production of the God of order and peace? Does not nature appear to unsophisticated, childlike minds, rather as living, feeling, and suffering with us, than as an inanimate mass devoid of all sympathy? O, the vain wisdom of this world, that would comprehend an inanimate creation proceeding from the hands of the living God! The Apostle tells us that it lives and is proceeding to its glorious renovation; it will be delivered from the servitude of corruption and misery; it will participate in the glorious freedom of the children of God, and again

become the happy sphere for the operation of blessed spirits. We look for a new heaven and a new earth, (2 Pet. iii. 13, Rev. xxi. 1,) and Nature likewise is groaning for her restoration.

And as all Nature unconsciously and in hope sighs for redemption, so in a more positive and more anxious manner do all those who have had a foretaste of godliness, who have tasted the first fruits of the Spirit. And we who are already enjoying to a certain extent the blessings of a spiritual existence, who have within us the certainty of being children of God, nevertheless continue to sigh and to hope in our innermost hearts for the fulness of our felicity, which can only be perfected when we shall be altogether released from the bondage of matter and the external world. It is remarkable and very significant, that the Apostle, in tracing the series of the different developments from unconscious creation up to the beings nearest perfection, does not advert in any way to those who are as yet so thoroughly sensual, that the mere gratification of their carnal passions leaves them nothing further to desire, or who are unable to raise themselves to the idea of any happiness beyond the sphere of their sensuality. These unhappy beings, who in their poverty hold themselves rich, have not even a faint idea of their wanting that which alone secures true and lasting

happiness; they are so completely absorbed in their nothingness, that not even a sigh expresses a longing for the felicity of another world. And even when they feel themselves poor in their poverty, when their worldly hopes are not realised, even then no solace reaches them from the source of light, but they lose themselves in sullen blank despair.

How happy, compared with these worldly-minded, who have their fill of earthly enjoyments but lack all desire for a future world and its bliss, are the children of God in all their anguish and tribulation, who although as yet enjoying happiness only in hope, and awaiting the fulness of their redemption with tears and sighs, yet derive consolation from the glorious certainty that the hour of that redemption draweth nigh.

24—28. For in hope are we blessed. Now
hope that is seen is not hope; for what any
25 one seeth, how can he still hope for it? But if
we hope for that which we see not, we wait
26 with patience. Likewise the Spirit also
cometh to the help of our weakness: for
what we should pray as befitteth we know
not, but the Spirit itself pleadeth for us
27 with inexpressible sighing. But He who
searcheth hearts knoweth what is the desire

of the Spirit, that He pleadeth for the saints
28 according to the will of God. But we know
that to those who love God all things work
together for the best, who are called ac-
cording to the decree.

Those who approach nearest towards perfection continue to feel themselves afflicted under trials; although their grief never breaks out into unseemly complaints or sullen discontent with the ways of Providence, for they know that "tribulation worketh patience, and patience proof, and proof hope." (v. 3.) Therefore we are happy even here, but only in hope. Beyond this we cannot advance during our present preparatory state. The highest blessedness, the fullest acquaintance with the designs of God, is reserved for those who are completely freed from all that is earthly. This blissful state cannot be attained until we have, in previous stages of our development, acquired a certainty of faith in hope, and until, without seeing, we shall have learned to feel it as an irrefragable truth that God, though his ways are inscrutable, is unremittingly leading us on to our salvation. This intensity of faith and hope in God, is the last preparatory step to an immediate existence in the world of blessed spirits. This highest and purest hope sheds a glory on our darkest paths; it increases

and strengthens that patience, from which it first proceeded. But still it is not sight, but hope. By what means and at what time the Redeemer will lead us to perfection, we are content not to know, for the very reason that we are as yet in a state of hope and not of sight, and therefore we wait with entire resignation to the will of God. Just in proportion as this faith and hope have attained life within us, as self-conscious beings acknowledging and rejoicing in the divine order in the visible world, will the unchangeable godly part of ourselves (*πνεῦμα*) which was darkened and fettered by the body of sin, again become free and accessible to the bright beams of the divine Spirit, and afford its aids to the weakness of man, in his present conscious existence in the visible world. As members of this visible world, even if we begin to comprehend our life and destiny, we know not even to pray as we ought. We survey with our limited intellect so short a span of our own course of life and of God's plans for us, that we ought not to address positive wishes to Him in our prayers. We are so completely in the dark as to our own good, that there is danger in every positive prayer of our praying for what might clash with our real happiness. God's ways are not our ways. What attentive observer has failed to remark, with respect to himself as well as others,

that the attainment of the most ardent desires, even such as we have considered the most innocent, has often brought us unexpected affliction; and that we have, on the other hand, often wished to ward off the very events which have ultimately secured our true welfare? For this reason every prayer, every reviewing before God of our destinies and our desires, should resolve itself into that one prayer: "Thy will be done!" even when we wish for nothing but what we believe to be pleasing in His sight. This, indeed, is the inward groaning of the spirit, that desires nothing but release from the bondage in which we are held, that desires nothing but the coming of the kingdom of God. While we are as yet unable in our prayers to submit all our desires to the divine will, the still sighing of the spirit within us will be the interpreter of our most inward prayer. When we are so depressed and helpless, that we know not what to wish for or pray for, when our anguish can find no words even before God, the silent groaning of the spirit is the most eloquent prayer. He who knows the heart of man, who needs no words to understand our innermost desires, hears the groaning of our spirit; He knows that the longing of the divine principle within us, is the longing for redemption, He knows that they who truly belong to Him have no desires but in

accordance with His will. And it is for this very reason that true inward prayer is always heard; for it is in accordance with the will of God, and our whole life becomes a realisation of such prayer. We then, who belong to Christ, who are penetrated with the love of God, and have recognised His love—we have the certainty of this, it is the firm conviction of our faith, that our prayers are heard, even if the visible proof of it is withheld. If God denies what appeared to us most desirable, and what was therefore the subject of our outward prayer, we know that He orders all things for our real good, whether we understand His ways or not. This is our firm conviction, founded on the most positive certainty, that God, agreeably to His eternal and immutable decrees, is leading us to that blessedness for which we were destined. There can be no doubt but that all God's dispensations must lead those also to happiness who do not yet share this glorious conviction—for how could the All-merciful ordain anything otherwise than in accordance with His own nature?—and that nothing can occasion them affliction but their own attempts in opposition to the will and the ordinances of God; but the immeasurable advantage of *knowing* this, can be the lot only of those who feel that they are children of God, led by the hand of a loving

Father; they alone can exult even in sufferings, and ever hold fast the conviction that though their path lead through the dark valley of death, every step will bring them nearer to their blissful home.

- 29—30. For whom He knew beforehand, them hath He also destined beforehand to be like to the image of His Son, so that he may be the first-born among many brethren.
 30 Moreover whom he destined beforehand, them hath he also called; and whom He hath called them hath He also justified: and whom He hath justified, them hath He also glorified.

I take the words in their most simple and natural signification, in order to introduce nothing into this much disputed passage which it does not necessarily contain. *προγινώσκειν* may indeed mean, to determine beforehand, to decree beforehand, but it *need* not always have this signification. St. Paul is here speaking of God conformably with human and temporal ideas, for there could be no question of before and after in reference to Him. But, according to this method of representation, knowledge must of necessity precede determination, as will be acknowledged by any one who does not, to suit a preconceived dogma, *i. e.* a human opinion, against all Scripture and reason, conceive of God as a Being who forms His decrees capriciously and without reason. Such a Being St. Paul no-where preaches, and most certainly not in this passage. It is true that God's decrees are not subject to external influence, but proceed solely from His own essence; but this essence is love; and if we divide this essence into various attributes, to suit human weakness, yet omniscience must necessarily remain one among the number. There would also remain, whatever objections may be advanced, a tautology in translating: "Those whom He destined beforehand

The Apostle here expresses his lively conviction that the resolve of God to lead us all to blessedness, can in no way be shaken. When we have passed through all the preparatory stages, so that the Spirit of God bears testimony to our spirit, that we are children of God and heirs with Jesus Christ, we have no more fear, we are certain that the purposes of God will be accomplished, because the resolve of God is founded upon His omniscience. He knew the germ and the innermost essence of our spirit, before we were born. Agreeably to His omniscience he assigned to us our places in the visible world, appointed our mutual relations, knew what trials we should have to undergo, what conflicts to encounter, what difficulties to overcome, and provided us with the strength necessary for the purpose. Nothing can befall us in the course of our life, whether inwardly or outwardly, which

He destined to be like," etc. For if God destined any one beforehand, He must have destined him to something, and that is precisely likeness to His Son. It is just as arbitrary and prejudiced a procedure to translate *προγιγνώσκειν* by "to love beforehand." For although, in the case of God, considered apart from time, knowledge and love cannot be separated, yet if resolved into notions of time, as is done here by St. Paul, knowledge precedes love. *καλεῖν* is, according to its ordinary acceptation, to invite, call; God has called those whom He has destined, He has caused the necessary call to be published to them. Wherein this call consists is not taught by the Apostle in this place. We are therefore by no means authorised to understand in a one-sided manner, either an outward injunction or an inward call of grace.

He has not foreseen and taken into His great account, so that nothing can happen to disturb His plans or necessitate any modification of them. All things must, under His guidance, work together for salvation and further our ultimate good, who are by divine predestination intended for everlasting bliss, whom He, agreeably to His omniscience, has chosen as now capable of conforming ourselves to the image of His Son, of becoming united with Him, who in His mercy condescended to become our Brother, who was the first to enter into the glory of the patrimony, of which He is willing to make us partakers. To His predisposing and merciful conduct we are indebted for the call which He has sent forth, and for our capability of hearkening to it. He has removed all hindrances, washed away our sins, which rendered us unfit for holiness; He has justified us and rendered us fit for happiness; He has glorified us in this world in hope, and will hereafter glorify us in blissful perfection.

These glorious words of comfort the Apostle addresses to all who, even in the midst of sufferings, rejoice in the faithful assurance, through the testimony of the Spirit of God, that they are children of God.—How comes it that this overflowing of the warmest heart, glowing with divine love, has been misconstrued into the

cold and terrible doctrine of predestination, a doctrine that does despite to the Fountain of mercy and makes the God of love a tyrant, the All-wise an arbitrary being who would doom millions to eternal misery, millions of whom He knew that they could not escape their destiny, the destiny indeed of His imposing?—Can St. Paul have held such a misconstruction possible, after having taught that God designed, without partiality and respect of persons, to save all who had become miserable by their own transgression, through Christ the only Redeemer; after having taught that it was God's will that all should be restored, and that He has also the power to execute His will?—Is it to be thought of for a moment that St. Paul, in this transport of love and thankfulness towards his Saviour, in the firm conviction of the blessedness awaiting him and all like him, should have thrown a scornful glance at those who were as yet less advanced than himself, telling them: *We* are saved through the inexplicable and arbitrary will of an unintelligible God, but *you*, do what you will, you are doomed to eternal wretchedness? No! such a doctrine was foreign to the affectionate heart of the Apostle, and must be so to all who are like him and his divine Master. His whole soul was full of the thought: God has led us, in a manner unintelligible to ourselves and agreeably

to His unlimited knowledge of our nature, to the likeness of His Son. From Him and not from ourselves has the call proceeded; He has made us capable of listening to it; He has purified us from our sins; He has crowned us with eternal glory! His work alone is the blessedness which we now enjoy in hope, and which we shall enjoy in all eternity!—Full of these thoughts, he continues his enraptured effusion.

31—39. What then remaineth yet for us to
32 say? If God is for us who is against us?
He who withheld not His own Son, but delivered Him up for all, how shall He not
33 with Him confer upon us all things? Who shall accuse the elect of God? God justifieth them!
34 Who shall condemn? Christ died, nay more, He is risen again! He is even at the right hand of God; He even pleadeth
35 our cause! Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Affliction? Or anguish? Or persecution? Or hunger? Or nakedness?
36 Or danger? Or sword? (As it is written, For Thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.)
37 But in all this we are far the conquerors,
38 through Him who hath loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers,

39 nor present, nor future, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

32. τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο. did not grudge, spare, or withhold Him from us. He did not esteem it too much even to give Him up. παρέδωκεν. It is by no means necessary to supply εἰς θάνατον, for redemption is here spoken of in general; the death of Christ is the subject of especial notice afterwards.—33 ἐκλεκτοί cannot be better rendered than by the literal “chosen,” although many passages might be adduced from the New Testament according to which it might be translated “beloved.” Those are meant who, according to the loving and wise plan of God, are *now* (in the moment of which St. Paul is speaking) chosen, as it were, from among all men, to participate in the highest blessings of the Gospel. It is true that they are beloved of God, but not partially preferred, or alone beloved, for God loved *all* men when *all* were yet sinners. The Apostle does not here develope his doctrine respecting this sequence of time in the work of redemption, but throws out significant hints on the subject further on. He is here speaking only of and to those who belonged to these chosen ones.—34 ἐν δεξιᾷ. A seat on the right hand of the throne was a mark of the highest honour.—35 τίς for τί. St. Paul personifies the hindrances in order to add energy to his words. ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ The love of Christ towards us. The Apostle does not set difficulties at defiance in his own strength, but adds, “through Him we conquer.” Our love towards Him must, it is true, become so strong that nothing can overpower it; but it can only attain such strength if we live wholly in Him and He in us, and this also is His work. He is the Finisher as well as the Author of our faith. Compare πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, iii. 22.—38, 39 ἀρχαί... δυνάμεις, etc. It is to no purpose to attempt to prove what St. Paul meant by each word here. God is for us; this is his great argument; therefore nothing apart from God, whether spiritual or earthly, can harm us. In using ὕψωμα the Apostle cannot certainly be supposed to have had philosophical speculations in view, which if partial and perverse may indeed place obstacles in the way of our access to Christ, but cannot possibly separate those from Him who have attained to life in Christ, and it is only of such that the Apostle is here speaking.

Sublime, heavenly words, full of spirituality and love! Dare we add a word of comment without fear of weakening their effect?—The Apostle has said, “From God, not from ourselves has our salvation proceeded;” what follows then, what shall we say to these things? He has planned our salvation, who then can oppose His will? Were our redemption our own work, did it depend upon our own strength, we could not be certain that we should not meet obstacles that might prove insurmountable. But God is for us! He knows no hindrances, and we know no fear. He has done for us what transcends all our conceptions. For His love there was no sacrifice too great, He spared not His own Son, a part, as it were, of His own being. After such a proof of His love, what are we to fear, what can He withhold from us? How can we imagine that such a design of God should fail of its purpose?—St. Paul now returns to his picture of God sitting in judgment. Who shall dare to lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God has made them righteous; there is no blemish, no guilt left; who shall condemn them? Christ, Himself the Judge, has purified them through His love reaching unto death and beyond death, and even in His glory He pleads their cause. Who, then, can have power to separate us from the love of Christ? Who can make His love

waver? When tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword encompass us—the Apostle here remembers the vicissitudes of his own life—shall we fear that His love will abandon us? Have not all true servants of God at all times been exposed to the persecutions and malignity of wickedness? Do we not know that all these sufferings must lead to our glory? Do we not feel His help nearest in such hours of distress? Is it not He who leads us to victory, and who even in the very moment of anguish enables us to look up to Him who is our strength, and to triumph in His love?—"I am persuaded beyond all possibility of doubt, that as in life no earthly power, so in death no spiritual power, that neither heaven nor hell, nor aught else conceivable, shall ever separate us from the love with which God loves us in Christ Jesus!"

It was the power of his life in Christ that exalted the Apostle to this glorious certainty of the immutable love of God, and to the happiness which was based upon it. And yet what raised him so much above all relations of the present and the future was, as he has said before, not blessedness in sight, in undisturbed unchangeable enjoyment, but blessedness in hope. He had again to descend to the life of the present, the life of development, where together with the

comparatively few whom he saw like himself approaching towards perfection, his eye fell on the immense number of those who were as yet far from the kingdom of God; it fell, first, on his beloved kinsmen, who in the proud belief that they were the people of God, the elect among the nations, shut their eyes to the light which should have directed their steps in the path of peace. His affectionate heart is overwhelmed with emotion, and thoughts many and sad arise within him at the sight. His soul is subdued by sorrow for the unhappy beings. How could he himself be happy in hope now; how could he be happy even in heaven itself, with the thought that so many would be excluded from the happiness which awaited him and the favoured few! How was what he now saw, to be reconciled with the promise formerly given to his nation, in which he himself trusted? How was it to be reconciled with the conviction of his soul, which he had so often expressed, that Christ is the Redeemer of all men, that it is the will of God that all should be saved through Him, and that nothing can shake the will of the All-merciful?—These momentous questions, so infinitely important to every loving heart, the Apostle developes and answers from this place to the end of the eleventh chapter, in a manner which leaves the heart of such as have found God nothing

more to desire. A light beaming forth from the love of God in Christ, brightens the dark paths of the divine course of development, and gives him to see in faith what no mortal eye can see by the light of human wisdom. But in attempting to make the revelations which he has received as accessible as possible to human faculties, he must needs lead us by the thorny path of human intelligence. And alas! how many who have striven to follow in his steps without that power of love which alone can make rough places smooth, have become entangled in the thorns which beset the way, and never yet attained the height from which alone the traveller can enjoy the blissful prospect!

We will endeavour to follow the Apostle; and when we are in danger of going astray, may we find a guide in the words which he has spoken: "It is impossible that God should be unjust." (ix. 14.) But the justice of God is one and the same with His love!

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—18. I say the truth in Christ! I lie not,
my conscience beareth me witness of it in
2 the Holy Ghost! Great is my sorrow, and
3 continual the anguish of my heart. I could
wish to be myself banished from Christ for
my brethren, my kinsmen according to the
4 flesh. They are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the sonship, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the service, and the promises; to whom belong the fathers, from whom Christ also sprung according to the flesh, who is God over all,
6 blessed for ever. Amen. It is not possible, however;* for the word of God is gone forth.
7 For not all who are of Israel are Israel, neither because they are of the seed of Abraham, are they all children, but, “In Isaac
8 shall thy seed be called.” That is, “Not the children of the flesh are the children of God also, but the children of the promise are reck-
9 oned for seed. For the word of the promise

* Namely, that I should now purchase the salvation of the Jews by the sacrifice of myself.

runs thus: According to this time will I
 10 come, and Sarah shall have a son.” And
 not this only, but Rebecca also, having con-
 11 ceived by one, Isaac our father, for when
 they [the children] were not yet born, and
 had done neither good nor evil, (that the
 predestination of God according to election
 might stand, not according to works, but the
 12 will of Him that calleth;) it was said to her,
 13 “The elder shall serve the younger,” as it
 is written, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have
 14 I hated.” What shall we say then? Is
 15 God unrighteous? God forbid! For He saith
 to Moses, To whomsoever I am merciful, to
 him I am merciful, and on whomsoever I
 have compassion, on him I have compassion.
 16 It depends not, therefore, on the will or the
 17 haste of any, but on God’s mercy. So the
 Scripture also saith to Pharaoh, “Even for
 this purpose have I raised thee up, that I
 may show my power in thee, and that my
 name may be declared throughout all the
 18 earth.” Therefore He is merciful to whom
 He will, and hardeneth whom he will.

3 ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου. The sense of this much disputed passage cannot be doubted—“I could wish to take upon myself the hardest and most impossible task.” In order to express the powerful thought, St. Paul chooses a powerful image. He could not seriously think of an eternal banishment from Christ, since he had immediately before so

Deep sorrow fills the soul of the Apostle upon contemplating the great mass of his nation, who were not as yet in a condition to partake of the

decidedly expressed his conviction that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ. Sooner than this, we might suppose some easier and less enduring proscription, or one that might be withdrawn; and that St. Paul had figuratively imagined the Jews under such a one, in reference to Christ, since he expressly says afterwards, that even they would not be separated from Him for ever. The meaning would then be, "If I could transfer them all to my own spiritual standing-point, I should be willing to be myself still at the same distance from Christ as they are, and consequently to undergo all the sufferings which such a standing-point necessarily involves." This would indeed be the highest proof of love, which any one could be capable of giving!—6 οὐχ οἶον δὲ ὅτι ἐκπέτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ. The oldest commentators take οἶον as an abverb for ὥς, in which case we must understand τοῦτο λέγω after οὐ, or as Luther translates, "But I say not such a thing [as this] that God's word has, therefore, come to nothing." But this rendering is obviously too tame, after the impassioned language which precedes, and is not sufficiently connected with what follows. On this account others, and among them Erasmus, Beza, Grotius and de Wette, translate: "But it is not possible that God's promise (or word) should be without effect." Of the grammatical reasons adduced against this rendering by Dr. Tholuck, there is only one that is of weight, namely, that the use of οἶον ὅτι, followed by a finite tense instead of an infinitive, is not supported by authorities. It may be said, however, against this translation, that, although quite in keeping with the tone of the Apostle, it is not connected with sufficient closeness with what precedes and follows. I therefore prefer Casaubon's translation, which takes ἐκπίπτειν in the sense of "proceeding from the mouth," and quotes 2 Maccabees vi. 8, where the word is used, of a decree that has gone out. There is no grammatical objection to his translation: "at id fieri non potest, nam a Deo profectus est hic sermo;" (for οἶος is essentially the same as οἶός τε, and might, therefore, easily be exchanged with it. See Buttmann Gr. § 137, and Matthiæ 896;) moreover it is quite connected with the preceding thought: "I would that I could purchase the immediate admission of my kinsmen by my own sacrifice,

blessings of the kingdom of God. Neither is this a momentary sorrow such as the occupations and distractions of the world might remove, nor an idle sorrow which might allow him to fall into a melancholy brooding. On the contrary, we find him ready to lend his aids to the utmost extent of his powers; we find him ready to sacrifice for the sake of his brethren his

but it is impossible, for God has otherwise decreed." And it is likewise connected with what follows, namely, the divine decrees which are the ground of the impossibility. (Gen. xxi. 12, etc.) Dr. Tholuck objects, 1st, that *λόγος* must here signify a *promise*; but he does not show why the more general expression *word* or *decree* should not here be its meaning, though in the 28th verse we find it employed to signify "announcement," or "decree," as in many other passages, *e.g.*, 1 Kings viii. 56, while, on the other hand, St. Paul uses *τὰ λόγια* for promises; 2ndly, that *ἐκπίπτειν* cannot be used in the sense of "going forth," of a command or oracle, because in Joshua xxi. 45, 1 Kings viii. 56, and 2 Kings x. 10, as well as in the New Testament, it is used of failing promises. But in the Septuagint, (which alone can be in question,) the word does not appear in any of the three passages referred to, for in the first we find *διαπίπτειν*, in the second *διαφωνεῖν*, and in the third *πίπτειν εἰς τὴν γῆν*. In the New Testament it is never united with *λόγος* or any other similar word, and consequently is not used either of accomplished or of failing promises. On the other hand, for the use of *ἐκπίπτειν* to express the giving or the coming to pass of oracles, etc., see Perizonius on *Ælian Var. Hist.* iii. 45. But whatever translation be preferred, it does not affect the sense of the whole, but only our appreciation of the Apostle's train of thought. The leading idea, on which all that follows is based, is this :—The promises of God are immutable; no man can alter them in the least. But the translation which I have chosen possesses a decided superiority over the rest, because it shows the connection of the thoughts, as St. Paul proceeds immediately after to show why all Jews could not at once embrace the Gospel.

own advantages, his position in the world, nay, his very life. And how have his deeds justified the sincerity of his intentions! Does not his whole life furnish proof, how earnestly he remained at all times interested in the welfare of his nation, how he addresses to them in the first instance his admonitions, how he has the case of their poor at heart, how even through his preaching among the Gentiles he endeavours to exercise an influence upon them. (xi. 13, 14.)—"Are they not my brethren?" he exclaims, justifying, as it were the excess of his attachment, "are they not those whose very name, Israelites, (*i. e.* wrestlers with God,) marks their high destination? Has not God guided them as His children, and given them a glorious inheritance? Has He not continued with them in the most intimate connection, given them laws, established for them a peculiar religious service, made them the depositaries of His most glorious promises? Are they not those to whom God has vouchsafed all these blessings, whom He has exalted above all nations? Was not Christ Himself, according to the flesh, descended from them, He who was God according to His spiritual nature, exalted above all, who is to be blessed for ever?" (1, 3, 4.)

But it is impossible, continues the Apostle, that my most ardent desires, my most earnest aspirations for my nation, should as yet be re-

alised. God has spoken. He has decreed otherwise; and it is impossible that a divine decree should be without effect, be it of threatening or promise.

In proceeding to give us a Theodicy in the highest sense of the word, and to prove that it is in conformity with the divine plans, that the Jews should as yet be incapable of availing themselves of the blessings of the Gospel, but that, notwithstanding the apparent contradiction, all the promises to that nation will be fulfilled in a glorious and unforeseen manner; and that the destinies of that nation are wonderfully connected with the development of the whole human race, the Apostle now lays down in the first place, the important truth, so often misunderstood, that in the development of the life of each individual as well as of the whole, all is subjected to the law of necessity, and that nothing can be changed through the interference of any created being.—Before we enter into his arguments, it will be necessary to observe, that notwithstanding his firm convictions of this unchangeable necessity, St. Paul is far from remaining an inactive spectator of this development, but that, on the contrary, we find him contributing with all the energies of his spirit to the accomplishment of all that he considers beneficial and desirable. Hence it follows, that the necessity which he

teaches is widely different from that fatalism which considers all things as subjected to a blind necessity, thus degrading the whole creation and man himself to the level of a piece of machinery evolving in the visible world without any will of their own, a series of events and phenomena as a spectacle to the Creator, and frequently a torment to the created. If we were to believe in a law of necessity of this description, it would be idle to consider our own will as of any importance, or indeed to consider ourselves as acting at all. In the divine system of necessity which St. Paul teaches, every spiritual being is placed by God Himself, to whom his inmost heart is known agreeably to his inward condition, in that position in which he will best develope his faculties for his own benefit, and for that of the whole community, and in which he will act agreeably to the law of his own spiritual nature, in so far as it is developed, that is, in a human point of view, with freedom. Every deed of man, therefore, because he accomplishes it in the sphere appointed to him, and in conformity with his spiritual condition at the time, is his own deed, as, indeed, is clearly proved by the joy which he feels in having done well, and the remorse which his evil deeds occasion him. Nevertheless, every individual action is necessary, because it is both a product of the inward

being of man, which at each moment is what it is and cannot at the same time be something different, and also a product of outward influencing circumstances, which cannot at the same time be as they are and yet different. Now, if every individual deed is necessary, then must the whole series of deeds, as they follow from each other, be necessary also. (Compare note page 242.) If, for example, St. Paul from affection for his own nation, takes upon himself the greatest hardships, and exposes himself to dangers to which he is compelled, not by any outward power, but by his own inward man, this is his own free act, because it proceeds from his own inward condition at the time, or from the sum of his own spiritual powers, agreeably to which he uses the outward circumstances as he does; and it is this tendency of his will which constitutes him the man Paul. He would have been the same Paul, if shackles or other hindrances had prevented his acting according to his will. His act, however, is at the same time necessary, because the same spiritual powers which constitute him Paul, could not under the same circumstance have allowed him to act otherwise than he does. And this necessity is divine, because it was God who so disposed the circumstances under which Saul, who was formerly in a much lower condition, became

Paul; because it was God who so regulated these circumstances, which were independent of the will of Paul, that the tendency of his will became such, that he could not act otherwise than he now does.

This view of the law of necessity to which, as St. Paul had before said, the whole creation also is subjected – as indeed must be the case, unless we foolishly consider the power displayed in the creation, as a distinct Godhead opposing or hindering the plans of God—this view is of the greatest importance for the understanding of the Apostle's doctrine, that each individual is subjected to the same necessity, because we see that this necessity, conducive to the benefit of all, is perfectly consistent with the freedom of the individual. They must have a most distorted conception of the wisdom and love of God who can for a moment suppose, that He has regulated the mutual relations of men, which must of course depend entirely upon His own will, in such a manner that a man's position obliges him to retrograde, or obstructs the development of the principle of good within him. The divine problem of adjusting the destinies of so many millions of fallen beings, in whom so many conflicting and disturbing powers must necessarily clash with each other, in such a manner that each may develop himself with freedom and yet with the least

possible detriment to others and the greatest benefit to himself, is certainly so intricate that the human mind can hardly grasp the question itself, and certainly cannot compass its solution. But let us recollect that it is a problem for the wisdom and love of *God*, and that His workings, of which with St. Paul we are here speaking, must surpass all human understanding, *because* of their being divine and eternal.

It had been the expectation of the Jews, that with the advent of the long hoped-for Messiah a new and better era would commence for the whole nation, and that under the sceptre of a mighty and wise king of their own, they would not only be liberated from foreign oppression, but would be raised to a degree of consideration and happiness hitherto altogether unknown. Although the hopes of individuals must have differed according to their spiritual condition, some amongst them thinking only of outward splendour and greatness, others rather of a spiritual change; yet most of them, if not all, had certainly indulged in the hope that the whole nation would more or less participate in this happy change. Even the disciples of the Lord, after His death, confessed the disappointment of their hopes, when they said, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." And St. Peter, even after the impres-

sive events of the Pentecost, was surprised that the Gentiles were to participate in the kingdom of the Messiah. (Acts x.) It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that, at the time when the Apostle wrote this Epistle, and when few of the Jews had as yet been converted to Christianity and fewer still had formed just ideas of the kingdom which is not of this world, even the most advanced amongst them should have been perplexed by the question, how these results were to be reconciled with the promises which God had given to His people.—The Apostle points out, in the first place, that these promises, because of their being of a spiritual character, could not be fulfilled to the whole of the nation at the time of the Messiah's visible appearance on earth. He repeats first, what he had before stated, (ii. 28,) that not all the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh were children of the promise in a spiritual sense; not, as some have thought, for the sake of correcting the erroneous notions of stubborn Jewish disputants, but, (for how could he imagine that by repeating the same argument which he had used before, he should convince those whom he had then failed in convincing?) in order to prove directly, from the divine decree itself, the impossibility of the whole Jewish nation entering at that time into the kingdom of the Messiah, and to

deduce the important conclusion, that all things in this world are developed according to the immutable and eternal will of God, which no mortal can fathom!—The spiritually advanced alone can accept the spiritual gifts offered them, and their spiritual progress does not depend upon descent according to the flesh; not all are Israelites in the true sense of the word, who belong to the Israelites outwardly, not all who descend from Abraham are children of the promise. Even the privileges of the Theocracy were not shared by all the descendants of Abraham, because, even in this sense, the promise went only to the descendants of Isaac, and not even to all of them, but only to the children of Jacob. It might be said that the other descendants of Abraham were not included because they did not descend from Sarah; but Jacob and Esau were children of the same father and mother, and yet even Esau's children were excluded. If then the descent according to the flesh did not establish a right to participate in the privileges of the Theocracy, how much less could it secure a right to participate in the promise in a spiritual sense? It evidently does not depend upon descent or upon human will or disposition, who shall have part in the latter, or in what order they shall be admitted to the glorious privilege, but solely upon the inscrutable and unchangeable will

of God who has foreseen and disposed all things. Neither therefore does it depend upon outward works which man accomplishes during his human existence. The outward act in so far as it is brought about by the circumstances assigned by God, can be of no value in His sight; in so far, however, as it proceeds from the inward man it may be estimated by the inward condition of the human spirit at its entrance into the world, according to which God assigned its place in the world, account being taken, so to speak, of the relations of the whole, which are known to God alone. But as God knows the nature of the individual, as well as the circumstances which will influence him during the whole course of his life, so does He also know before his birth the whole series of the influences which will act upon him during his life, and need not, therefore, await their effect in order to determine the worth of man and His own love. Of this divine knowledge of men before their birth, and the consequent regulation and disposal of the events of their lives, we have a most impressive example in the history of the twin brothers Jacob and Esau. Before the children were born, and consequently before there were either good or bad actions to record of them in this world, their destinies were fixed, and so fixed for reasons known alone to the Omniscient, All-wise,

and All-merciful, whose decrees man must adore in humility, as all human judgment of them would be criminal presumption.—It does not in any way alter the case if we refer the sentence, “The elder shall serve the younger,” not to Jacob and Esau, but to the nations which were to take their descent from them, because what is said would apply to the descendants as well as to their progenitors. The descendants likewise had not performed any actual deeds either for good or for evil, and therefore the decree of God when He thus fixed their future destinies could not have been influenced by their deeds, but solely by the condition of their spirits, which was known to Himself alone.—Neither would it alter the case to refer this predestination to their outward fate only, to their participation in or exclusion from the benefits of the Theocracy, since what we call outward destinies can be ordained by God only for spiritual purposes and from spiritual causes.—That the expression, “Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated,” is not to be understood literally or in the sense which we apply to hatred, need hardly be noticed, not only because it is a Hebrew idiom to call love of a lesser degree in comparison with love of a higher degree hatred; but because a God of hatred would be a contradiction, and would in reality be synonymous with

a hating love, because God is Love. But even degrees of love are inadmissible in reference to God, without a cause inherent in the object. And, as Solomon so beautifully expresses it, (Wisd. xi. 24.) “For Thou lovest all things that are, and abhorrest nothing which Thou hast made, for never wouldest Thou have made anything if Thou hadst hated it”; so might we say with equal justice: God cannot have made one thing less deserving of His love than another; the reason of God’s loving one being less than another can be inherent only in the object itself, and a consequence of its own transgression.

After what has been said, who can any longer find these words of the Apostle harsh, or wish to assign to them any other signification? The idea which many have grounded on them that God does not guide the destinies of man according to His omniscience, wisdom, and love, but that according to a despotic and arbitrary will He dooms millions to everlasting misery, is as foreign to the Apostle as it is to God Himself. St. Paul wishing to explain why, *at the time of which he is speaking*, all the Jews were not fit to become partakers of the Messiah’s kingdom, shows that God never made any such promise; that the fitness of men to participate in the highest spiritual blessedness, and the manner of their being conducted to such a fitness, depending

upon the time, place and other circumstances of their lives, cannot be fathomed by human reason, but is to be adored in humility as a divine decree and as the result of God's omniscience, all-wisdom, and love.

"What shall we say then," the Apostle continues, "is God unrighteous?" God forbid! How dark and intricate soever our paths or those of others may appear to us, how little soever we may be able to recognise God's love in the course of our lives, or in the history of mankind, let the firm conviction "it is impossible that God should be unjust" ever prevent all criminally presumptuous judgment, and all doubts of the wisdom of the All-wise, and the love of the All-merciful. O that many of the interpreters of this passage had kept before their eyes and in their heart this warning of the Apostle! From what awful errors would they have been saved!

Moses says, "All His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He;" (Deut. xxxii. 4;) and, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." (Exod. xxxiii. 19.) The last words then, must be consistent with the former, and consequently if God does not vouchsafe to give such visible proofs of His love to some as He does to others, this dis-

inction must yet be reconcileable with His righteousness. The gifts and manifestations of His love are also gifts and manifestations of His righteousness, and do not in any way depend upon man's own will and aspirations, upon what is not as yet restored to godliness.. Man can neither determine his own destinies, nor by his own exertions *merit* the love and blessings of God, which are the free gifts of His mercy. Nor can the mightiest and proudest king by his impotent attempts thwart the ways of God in the most trifling degree; even what he accomplishes against the divine law, must, in the hands of an all-disposing God, tend to the promotion of His purposes. Pharaoh, in his obstinacy, acted his own part in conformity with his degraded nature, in opposing himself to God's behests, and yet he was only a means in the hands of God, whose providence made use of his very depravity to accomplish His purposes. "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the world." (Exod. ix. 16.) It was the will of God that the Jews should leave Egypt under difficulties and against the will of the king, for which one reason at least is very apparent, namely that the nation might be impressed with the

power of their God, and their wavering reliance on Him be strengthened, and that other nations also might recognise His greatness. It was for this reason that so obstinate a king then sate on the throne of Egypt; for under the sway of an obedient king, these results would not have been brought about. Not that God *created* an obstinate and hateful being and made him king of Egypt, only to find him hateful and to punish him; He placed one of the human spirits ready to his hand, upon the throne at that time, so that while the act of the king was his own act, its beneficial consequences are to be ascribed to God alone.—What a warning is this to despots and perverters of nations! They imagine, in the insolence of their pride, that they sway the destinies of the nations subjected to their rule, and lo, they are themselves slaves who execute the will of their unknown Lord. Their wickedness is their own, and certain punishment awaits them; but the good resulting from their doings, which they neither intended nor were able to prevent, is the work of God. Those on whom they look down with scorn and contempt, the victims of their cruelty, will say in their hearts, if they really belong to Christ's flock: "Thou couldest have no power over me if it were not given thee;" they will rejoice inwardly, assured,

because they love God, that their sufferings must lead to their good.

Thus, then, the words, "Therefore He is merciful to whom He will, and hardeneth whom He will," are explained in a most simple and natural manner. It remains to observe, with reference to the words "God hardeneth," which taken by themselves would certainly be embarrassing, that according to the forcible mode of expression usual in Oriental languages, all secondary causes are passed over, and the result referred immediately to God. God created Pharaoh; God placed him in circumstances in which his stubbornness rose to its highest pitch, so that he appeared harder of heart than he had formerly shown himself; all which is compressed into the words "He hardened him." That this expression means no more than "Pharaoh hardened himself," may be clearly perceived by comparing Exod. viii. 15, 32, and ix. 34.*

But even for Pharaoh himself and his servants, who hardened their hearts with him, these results, brought about by the divine will, could not possibly be in reality pernicious. As he did not *become worse* than he was, by Moses' speaking to him, but only found occasion thereby to

* The passages which Dr. Tholuck quotes from Origen in reference to this verse, are extremely well worth reading.

show himself as he really was, these results could not, humanly speaking, subject him to greater punishment. On the contrary, the result which he had not anticipated or brought about, might become beneficial to himself. If the experiences of his life were not lost upon him, he must have learnt after his death, that it is madness to fight against God; his hardened heart must have been softened, though perhaps through sufferings of which we can have no conception.

19—21. Thou wilt now reply, Why then doth
 He yet find fault? For who can resist His
 20 will? But, O man, who art thou that reasonest with God? Does the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou
 21 so made me? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, from the same mass to make one vessel for honourable use, and another for dishonourable?

The doctrine of necessity, of which St. Paul, having only his principal object in view, gives a bold outline without entering into the details, adducing only a few passages from the Old Testament by way of proof, cannot but lead a reflecting mind to the question: How, then, if all things happen by the unchangeable will of God, whom nothing can resist, can He require

that anything should happen otherwise than it does? How can He make man responsible for what he performs according to this law of necessity? The question is so natural, that St. Paul, who himself so acute a thinker constantly exhorts others to think for themselves, cannot reproach any one for raising it, especially as by his own theory the question wherever it is raised, is raised by necessity, and consequently cannot be avoided.—I cannot, therefore, agree with such as here again suppose an allusion to stiff-necked Jews who intentionally mistook the Apostle's words, and whom, in anticipation of such a question, he would put off with an evasive answer. I believe, on the contrary, that it is a question which must often in former times have engaged his own attention, and which he must, therefore, have looked for from many well-meaning persons. Neither is what St. Paul advances in lieu of a positive answer, calculated to silence an obstinate Jewish disputant, because these sentences taken likewise from the Old Testament, (Jer. xlv. 9; comp. Jer. xxix. 16 and Jer. xiii. 6,) only express the same idea in appropriate similes, and in most forcible language. If, therefore, the Jew would not accept the passages before quoted as proofs, but give them another meaning, why should he not treat these in the same manner? Such a Jew, however, would not deny, God's

power to govern all things according to His will; nay, he would himself insist upon it, but with the addition that his God uses this His power in order to bless him in preference to all others. It was this prejudice which St. Paul wanted to remove; and for that very reason the Jews opposed him. If, then, St. Paul, in quoting the passage: "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" intended also to express his conviction that God has power to bring the Gentile also into His kingdom, the Jew would not deny this in respect to the *power*, but in respect to the *will* of God; and he would have no reason for combating the assertion of the Apostle, that all things are brought to pass by the immutable will of God.

It is evident therefore, that St. Paul does not address his reply to a Jew from whom he might have anticipated contradiction; neither had he any occasion to do so while he was making communications regarding the divine government of the world to Christians, his faithful brethren united with Christ through spiritual baptism—communications which could be comprehended by none else. For such, however, the new question, which he puts instead of answering the first, contains within itself the most instructive and satisfactory reply, inasmuch as it defines the proper limits of an intellectual inquiry, beyond

which human reason does not reach. The understanding can do no more than draw conclusions from given premises by combinations and according to the laws of thought; and the more acute the understanding, the more perfect will be the conclusions at which it arrives. But according to these very laws, the results must be homogeneous with the premises. It would be an abnegation of the understanding, madness indeed, to attempt drawing supernatural and infinite conclusions from natural and finite premises. The human understanding as such, or man indeed, in so far as he belongs to this world, has no premises at his command but such as are derived from this world, and cannot possibly through the operations of his understanding, arrive at results pertaining to another. The premises derived from a spiritual world are accessible to him only in so far as, through purity of heart, he has again become a member of the spiritual world; but, when once in possession of them, he can and ought to treat them according to the laws of thought, in order to make them available in his present condition. It would be as foolish for a human being, to seek for heavenly premises in a sphere which he has not yet reached, as if he proposed to himself to collect experiences in another world, to which all access is denied him.—Thus a philosopher, starting

from his observations of terrestrial phenomena, and logically combining them, may arrive at a knowledge of the motion of the universe and its organisation dependent thereon; but he cannot by these means arrive at a knowledge of the object for which it was constructed, except in so far as he presupposes some final cause. This presupposition, however, he must attain from another source, widely differing from earthly experience and calculation. It is for this reason that equally great astronomers, while their scientific results agree in every particular, have entertained the most different views as to the final cause of the universe; and in this respect, the most ignorant peasant not unfrequently surpasses the greatest natural philosopher.

If we apply what has been said to the question before us, we cannot but be struck with the power of the Apostle's words: "O man, who art thou that reasonest with God?" Who art thou that callest Him to account? What finite being can have the presumption to scrutinize the plans of the Infinite? What canst thou know of the purposes of God but what He chooses to reveal to thee, and what He reveals to thee of the infinite, can it be measured by any earthly measure?—Must not every one, wise as he may think himself, confess that he is a vessel from the hand of the inscrutable God, and that he has no answer

and can have no answer to give to the question : Why am I shaped as I am, except that it has so pleased God? The most learned philosopher knows nothing of the laws according to which our bodies are formed; and if he did, he would only know what they were without knowing wherefore. And would he presume to discover this by his own powers? To sit in judgment upon God's wisdom? What is there, then, so terrible in this comparison of the Apostle, which has been found so terrible by many, when it says in reality no more than what every one must admit, that we are formed by a higher Power, whether we call that inscrutable Power God, or the Spirit of the Universe, or Nature? What we think so terrible, lies not in the comparison which the Apostle uses, nor in the truth which it is intended to convey, but solely in the manner of our interpretation, which is dependent upon our own spiritual condition. To him who knows not God, it is frightful because it would lead him to fatalism, and place him at the mercy of a Power to which he is altogether a stranger. He who knows God only as an almighty Being, would be led by it to slavish fear and superstitious observances, by which to propitiate this fearful Power; or to an infatuated belief in a partial and capricious demon. He who knows the God of love and cherishes Him in his inner-

most heart, knows no fear, for "love casteth out fear." To him the thought that God governs and disposes all things according to His will, is so far from being terrible that he finds in it his most cheering solace. In whose hands could he wish to see the government of the world, but in those of the God of love? To what necessity, could he subject himself with greater confidence and hope, than to that assigned by God, who, he knows, hath subjected all things in hope, that they may be conducted to divine freedom and felicity?

The comparison which the Apostle uses becomes of still greater significance, if we think of the Redeeming God, who, out of chaos, which was a product of the fall, *formed* all things according to His wisdom, to lead them to their spiritual regeneration. Shall we who have changed order into disorder, the original creation into chaos, presume to prescribe to God the methods by which He is to restore order? Who but God could know the real worth and usefulness of each for His purposes, and assign to each his place accordingly, making one a vessel unto honour, and another a vessel unto dishonour?

The Apostle has thus most clearly demonstrated that all things in this world develop themselves according to His immutable and eternal will. He now proceeds as follows:

22—33. But if God, willing to show His wrath and to make known His power, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, even for the purpose of making known the fulness of His glory towards the vessels of mercy which He before made ready to glory:—among whom He hath also called us, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles:—as He saith also in Hosea, “I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the Sons of the Living God.” And Esaias crieth concerning Israel, “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sands of the sea, yet a remnant shall be saved. For, finishing His decree, He doth it in the shortest way in righteousness: yea, quickly shall the Lord accomplish His decree upon the earth.” And as Esaias said before, “Had not the Lord of Sabaoth left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been made like Gomorrha.” What shall we say then? Gentiles, which did not pursue after righteousness, have attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is from faith. But Israel, which

pursued after a law of righteousness, hath not yet attained to the law of righteousness.
 32 Wherefore? Because [they pursued] not by faith, but by the law of works. For they stumbled at the stone of stumbling, as it
 33 is written: "Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."

The first words of this paragraph fall harshly on our ear, but, after what has been said, they will present no new difficulty. The wrath of God, as we have before observed, signifies the utter displeasure of God at evil. This incompatibility of evil with God, necessitates His separating the evil from the good in His capacity of a Redeemer, whose design is to re-unite with

23 καὶ, for this too among other purposes.—28 λόγος, the word of God=decree. He utters, as it were, only what is irrevocable, and, in fulfilling His decree, συντελῶν, He does it withal in the shortest way συντέμνων (cutting short). Thus these words taken in their ordinary acceptation appear to me to render best the sense of the passage. (See Eccclus. x. 22—23.) It involves, moreover, a confirmation of the proposition: God doeth everything according to His decree, without any exception, but with righteousness.—30 St. Paul had interrupted, at the end of the 23rd verse, the passage commencing at the 22nd verse, in order to introduce the parenthesis "Which He had afore prepared," etc. He now resumes with the words, "What shall we say then?" τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν. See the exposition. Thus οὖν means "accordingly," "consequently," "then."—32 νόμος, as in vii. 23, in the sense of rule, standard. The words οὐκ ἔφθασε involve the meaning, "did not attain to the law sooner than, or so soon as, the others."

Himself those who have become sinful. And as such a separating process cannot but be painful, it makes what is in reality the love of God, since it occasions pain, appear as wrath.* The expression “vessels of wrath and of mercy,” is used very appropriately in this place, as suggested by the comparison before employed. Vessels of wrath are those which are filled with the cause of wrath, with evil; they are doomed to misery and destruction, but not to everlasting misery, which is nowhere mentioned, because misery is the inseparable consequence of evil. They are formed by God in so far as He has given them their present form; but the potter did not make the clay, God did not create evil;

* If any one were to charge it as a reproach on the writers of the New Testament, that they speak of the wrath of God, after having represented Him as the immutably All-loving, or from such expressions were to draw the conclusion, that they were still thinking of God as a Being full of wrath, he might not inaptly be compared to a student of astronomy, who, after having been taught that the sun and stars do not change their places, but that the cause of their apparent change of position is to be explained by the motion of the earth, should imagine, on hearing his master continue to talk of the rising and setting of the sun, that he was contradicting himself, or had changed his opinion. All instruction must start from external phenomena; and, therefore, it was necessary the Old Testament also should begin its teaching respecting God from the phenomena with which man was conversant in his condition at the time. But after we have been taught that all change lies not in the immutably all-loving God, but in us, we may certainly be allowed to continue using the expressions to which we have become accustomed, and which recommend themselves by their brevity and force, since no misconception is to be feared on the part of the initiated.

He has given to the evil matter the form most appropriate for His merciful designs, and formed of it that for which it was fit. We must recollect, that it is not the Apostle's object to speak, in this place of the judgment of God as such, and that his object is only to show, why at the time of the visible appearance of the Messiah, all Jews were not fit to enter His kingdom.

The Apostle had said, that the decrees of God are fixed and immutable, but founded upon His righteousness. No human being can alter the course of the divine developments; no mortal eye can penetrate the plans of God; we must all confess that we are vessels shaped by Him for His purposes, instruments in His hands.—He now continues: If in the development of the divine plan, in the separation of good and evil, and the manifestation of the power of God therein, we find that He endures, with much long suffering, even those that are sinful, and unfit to enter into the kingdom of truth and felicity, the well-disposed may therein find a proof of His mercy and forbearance, but the great plans of His mercy they will not thereby understand. Some might even rashly suppose or fear that God's forbearance might retard the ultimate felicity of the godly, and thus prove a hindrance to those also who are further advanced. But what if this long suffering prove,

not only salutary to those who are its objects, but a blessing also to the more advanced, to the elect? (St. Paul here prepares us for what he afterwards explains more fully, that the obduracy of the Jews has become a benefit to the more perfected amongst the Gentiles.) What, if all who were then fit to enter the Messiah's kingdom, and such only, had been born *Jews*, and all others heathens? Is it not easy to see that a community composed of vicious members only, without the benefit of good example and instruction would infallibly have been impeded in the course of their progress, while, on the other hand, a community of well-disposed but still imperfect beings would have wanted many opportunities of bringing out and laying aside their faults, and of exercising patience, forbearance and resignation? God has distributed the good and the bad in such wise, according to His loving wisdom, that each exercises upon the other a beneficial influence. For that reason there were placed amongst the heathens many who were capable of appropriating the blessings proffered by the Gospel; and we may venture to add without presumption, that it was expedient that many such, both among Jews and heathens, should remain among their former co-religionists, in order to exercise a wholesome influence upon them, although certainly without prejudice to themselves. These elect, amongst

whom we number ourselves also, were not among the Jews only, but also among the heathen ; and this agrees fully, the Apostle tells us, with the revelations which God has vouchsafed to us respecting His eternal decrees. Did not the ancient prophets declare, that many who did not belong to the Jewish nation should enter the kingdom of the Messiah? Did they not distinctly tell us, that of the Israelites but a proportionably small number would be fit to enter, and that the whole nation would become degenerate if God had not so ordered it that a number of the godly should remain amongst them? Now, if we can discern even now such loving wisdom in God's eternal dispensations, must not all doubt vanish, all presumptuous scrutiny be at an end, and nothing but joy and thanksgiving remain, that all things are ordered by the immutable will of God? Do we not recognise in the conduct of our race, not only an unchangeable but also a righteous decree, founded not upon partiality, but upon the intrinsic worth of the elect! Heathens, who did not strive for righteousness, who did not attribute to themselves a vain righteousness, self-devised and self-sufficient, have attained that righteousness which is pleasing in the sight of God, while Israelites who were labouring for a righteousness of their own devising, have not

attained that true righteousness. And why? Because their striving did not originate in faith, in purity of heart, but sprang from an earthly soil, and was directed towards selfish purposes; because, in their self-sufficiency, they expected to attain righteousness through works and observances. With this tendency of their mind they could not but stumble at that stumbling-block which was laid in Zion, they could not but take offence at Him, who condemning all self-justification and self-sufficiency, required humility, acknowledgment of their own unworthiness and helplessness, and a resigned dependence on the Saviour. They who have faith in this Rock of their salvation, who, penetrated with the truth of His divine teaching, offer up their whole being for a sacrifice, they, and they alone, shall never be confounded.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

- 1—4. Brethren, the desire of my heart, and my prayer to God for them is directed towards their salvation. For I bear witness to them, that they have zeal for God, but not with knowledge. For not knowing the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they are not subjected to the righteousness of God.
- 4 For the end of the law is Christ, for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The Apostle had stated, in the 32nd verse of the preceding chapter, the causes why so many of the Jews as yet remained unfit for the kingdom of the Messiah. In proceeding to developpe them still further, and to show that the fact depended not upon any arbitrary decree on the part of God, but upon their own spiritual condition and purity, he once more gives utterance to the most affectionate desire of his heart

1 It seems to be more in accordance with the connection to take *ὑπεράγνησαν* in the ordinary passive meaning, than to assign to it a middle force.

for the salvation of his own people. He praises them for all that he finds in them worthy of his praise; he does not accuse them of indifference towards God, on the contrary, he commends their earnestness and zeal; but at the same time he laments that this zeal is not directed in a right channel, nor founded upon the true knowledge of God, and, therefore, sure to fail of its purpose. They are ignorant, he tells them, of the righteousness of God, which leads to blessedness through purification and annihilation of evil, and, therefore, demands purity of heart and a willing and faithful adherence to the divine order. They are endeavouring to attain justification and blessedness by their own devices, by works and observances, unwilling to relinquish their selfish pursuits, and for this reason they cannot be received within the community of the godly, or become members of the kingdom of the Messiah, which sets forth that higher order, the divine righteousness, and does not admit what is at variance with it. For Christ is the end of the law, of the old order of things and of all former aspirations, for all believing in Him belong truly to the new order, the righteousness of God. Whoever desires to belong to His kingdom, must have recognised and acknowledged Him as his only Saviour, and must, therefore, have renounced all self-justi-

fication, and relinquished all ideas of merit founded upon works. He must have died to the law, to live alone in Christ. This simple sense of words, so variously interpreted, follows naturally from the connection. Neither the Mosaic law nor any other law was to cease on the appearance of Christ; it has not ceased, nor was it expedient that it should cease, so long as there were men who required to be controlled by positive laws. There are at this moment men below the law, (in a lawless state,) and men under the law, (page 275 ff,) and so long as this is the case, the restraints of the law cannot be dispensed with. But for those who have advanced to a state above the law, there is no further law; they are free from the law, because they live in Christ; for them, Christ is the end of the law.

5—11. For Moses describes the righteousness of the law, “The man who doeth these
6 things [the law] shall live by them.” But the righteousness by faith speaketh thus: Say not in thine heart, Who shall go up to heaven? that is to bring down Christ:
7 or, Who shall go down into the deep? that
8 is, to bring up Christ from the dead. But what saith it? Near is the word to thee, in thy mouth and in thine heart, that is, the
9 word of faith which we preach; for if thou

with thy mouth confessest the Lord Jesus,
and in thine heart believest that God hath
raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be
10 blessed. For by the faith of the heart
we are made righteous, and with the con-
11 fession of the heart we are blessed. For
the Scripture saith, “Whosoever believeth
on Him shall not be ashamed.”

Moses, continues the Apostle, has already made a distinction between the law of works and the law of faith,* and has pointed out the far more blessed effects of the latter; whence it follows, that whoever would attain the blessings of the latter must have renounced the principle of the former, and made the principle of the latter his own. Of the positive law it is said: “Ye shall, therefore, keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them.” (Lev. xviii. 5.) The transgressions of the law were often punishable with death, so that *to live* denotes, in the first place, exemption from punishment; but if we admit that the word expresses also a state of happiness, St. Paul cannot in this place mean it to express more than an experiencing of beneficial results, not the highest blessedness, which would destroy the force of the opposition. When

* Compare what has been said on chap. iii. 1—20, page 136.

Moses in his glorious charge to the assembled people, shortly before his death, set before them blessings and curses as the consequences of obedience and disobedience; and told them that notwithstanding the transgressions of the law, God would be gracious to those who would again turn to Him with heart and soul, that He would give them the promised land, and circumcise their hearts, that they might love Him with all their heart and all their soul, he added: "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea* for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." (Deut. xxx. 11—14.) St. Paul most properly considers this to allude to justification by faith, and as the cry of those in whose heart the deeper sense of the divine law, the law of love, has gained life. Moses could not mean to say, that the divine law in its deepest significance had

* St. Paul here uses the word "deep," instead of "sea," perhaps inadvertently, as he was quoting from memory, or perhaps in order to give additional force to the expression. The sense remains the same.

attained life in the whole of the assembled multitude, since in that case the admonition to keep it would have been uncalled for. He means, according to St. Paul's interpretation: Those whose hearts are truly circumcised, who are fit to re-enter into the Land of Promise in its higher sense, will no more seek for the divine law, neither in heaven nor in the deep; it will be in their mouth and in their heart. They have it in their mouth because it lies in their heart. The Giver of the divine law, of this law of love, is Christ and only Christ. It is for this reason that the Apostle speaks of ascending into heaven, and descending into the deep for the divine law: bringing Christ down from above, and bringing up Christ again from the dead. Whoever has found Him, has no further occasion to seek, he carries in his heart all that he can need. This is the faith which we preach. We must relinquish the law of works, the service for reward, to be with Christ; and hence it becomes evident that no one can be with Him who continues to adhere to the observance of the outward law. They would have learned this of Moses, if they had understood the depth of his preaching.* To

* When Aben Ezra says that Moses promises eternal possessions to them who know the mystery of the law, and temporal possessions to them who do not, we must recollect that, according to St. Paul, the mystery of the law consists in this, that it refers to divine principles, leads to Christ, and finds its accomplishment in Him.

acknowledge Christ with mouth and heart for the only Redeemer, to be assured that the power of God lived in Him and raised Him from the dead, this is that faith which leads to eternal blessedness. This conviction of the heart is an earnest of righteousness in its highest sense: this deep-seated persuasion is blessedness. It is of Him, of our Redeemer, that the Scripture says: "He who believeth in Him, shall never be confounded."

12—21. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same is Lord of all, rich unto all that call upon Him. For, "Every one that calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how can they call upon Him in whom they believe not? And how can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach if they are not sent? As it is written: "How welcome are the feet of them who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings!" But not all hearkened to the good tidings. For Esaias saith, "Lord who believeth our report?" Faith then cometh from preaching, and preaching by the word of God. Now I ask: have they not heard? Nay: "Into all lands went

forth their sound, and to the ends of the
 19 world their call." I ask further; did
 Israel not know? But already Moses saith,
 "I will move you to jealousy by that which
 is no nation, I will provoke you to wrath
 20 by a foolish people." But Esaias goes so
 far as to say: "I am found by them who
 21 sought me not, I am made manifest to them
 who enquired not after me." Of Israel, on
 the other hand, he saith: "The whole day
 I stretch out my hands to a disobedient and
 rebellious people."

The Apostle had said that no one will be lost who has recognised the Redeemer for what He is, and turns to Him with confidence—so says the Scripture. This does not apply to the Jews alone but to the Gentiles also, because one God is the God of all, one Redeemer the Redeemer of all. He is rich enough to bless all, He has not to withhold from one what He would grant to another, His boundless riches are not diminished by what He dispenses, whoever asks of Him shall be satisfied. It is not by chance that the Apostle, in this place, refers to what he had so often stated before, that the love of God and

15 The significations "timely," and "beautiful," "lovely," blend here in *ἁπαῖος*. For the divine message can then only be indeed lovely and welcome, when it meets with matured and prepared dispositions.

redemption is not confined to the Jews, but extends to all the children of God. He repeats this, because it forms a necessary link in the chain of his argument. He could not show why so many of the Jews remained as yet excluded from the kingdom of the Messiah, and what were God's designs with respect to their nation, without adverting to the whole of God's plans, which include the beatification of all. Indeed it is his main object to make it clear that the plan of redemption includes the whole race, although he had first spoken of the Jews, and appears to keep them chiefly in view. If then, he continues, all who invoke the name of the Redeeming God are to be saved, without any reference to outward circumstances, if all are to be saved who put their trust in the power of His love, what follows? They cannot invoke His name or turn to Him without believing in Him, without being firmly convinced that it is He who can and will succour them. This again, they cannot do, without having heard of Him; their general belief in God, their undefinable longing for help requires instruction and direction towards its object, they require being led to the source from which they may draw grace for grace. But for this end preachers are required, and these do not go forth according to their own will and pleasure, it is a call from God

which leads them at all times where they are required. Therefore it is to them that the beautiful words of Isaiah refer: (lii. 7 :) "Welcome are the messengers that preach peace and salvation!" But they can be welcome only to those who have a longing for the tidings of salvation, who are prepared to receive them. Those who have no longing for the peace offered them, could not receive the messengers as offering them happiness, and therefore Isaiah exclaims; "Lord, who believeth our report?"—Christ, therefore, must be preached, that the longings of the heart may be directed to their proper object, that belief in Christ may grow. But how and when He is to be preached, will depend upon the call of God, who disposes all things.—Christ had, therefore, to be preached amongst Jews and Gentiles, because there were amongst both such as were fit to receive the tidings of peace, and were at that time ready to enter the kingdom of the Messiah, according to the will of God.—And has not Christ been preached to them? Can the Jews complain that He has not been preached to them? Has not the sound of the preaching gone forth from their land into all lands? They cannot certainly plead any want of opportunity for becoming acquainted with Christ; they have remained unfaithful because they did not want peace, because they would not accept the tidings

of the salvation offered them. The preaching of the Gospel was necessary for belief, but the outward hearing of the word does not beget belief.—Was it not also proclaimed to Israel that the tidings of grace would be carried to other nations, if they rejected it? Do not our Holy Scriptures proclaim it, and can they complain if this now comes to pass? Moses says: “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you;” that is, if you will not hear my voice, if you reject the messengers which I have sent you, their message shall be carried to other nations. And Isaiah, although his bold denunciations gathered dangers around him, declares that other nations would hearken to the voice of God, while the people to whom he was sent, opposed his zealous and indefatigable preaching with contempt and contradiction. What happened then, happens in our own days. It is the immutable decree of God which is fulfilled.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—6. Now I ask, Hath God then cast off His people? God forbid! I myself am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast off His people which He foreknew. Or know ye not what the Scripture saith, when Elias complained of Israel to God, “Lord, thy prophets have they killed, and destroyed thine altars; I alone am left, and they seek after my life?” And what said the divine answer to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee before Baal.” Even so also at this present time there is left a remnant according to the election of grace. But if of grace, then it is no longer on account of works; for else grace would not be grace.*

* The ordinary text contains an additional clause, which is wanting in many of the MSS. “But if it be for the sake of works then it is no more grace, for otherwise work is no more work.”

It is quite inconsistent with the view of the Apostle to supply *ἅπαντα* or *ὅλον* with the words *τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ*. Not only is it quite contrary to the express teaching of St. Paul, that God should cast off any one, since he himself shows that even a

After having fully demonstrated that the fact of so many Israelites not having entered the kingdom of the Messiah, is perfectly in accordance with the declarations of the Holy Scriptures, and cannot, therefore, occasion astonishment or unbelief in those who understand their deep import; the Apostle now approaches a question of the greatest interest to his benevolent heart. He asks: "What, then, is to be the fate of those who have rejected the salvation offered them? Has God cast off His people? Has He withdrawn His helping hand from those to whom He had formerly vouchsafed so many distinguishing tokens of His love and merciful guidance? God forbid! He has not rejected the people which He, to whom all things are known beforehand, had called His own." The words, "I myself am also an Israelite," are to be understood only as an expression of his love, affected as he was by the thought of so many being rejected, with

temporary holding back is man's fault and not God's; but he shows in this very chapter, that God, in spite of the opposition of the Jews, which rendered their *immediate* participation in the Messianic kingdom impossible, will nevertheless lead them *all* to it.—2 *πρόγνω*. Here, too, what was remarked at viii. 29, is applicable. God has not cast off His own people, that people to whom He has given such distinguished marks of His gracious guidance, which was to be the subject of such a great and fruitful development, as though He had made a mistake in His choice. He knew His people beforehand, knew how they would act, and yet chose them. We shall return to this election of the Israelites further on.

whom he found himself so intimately connected by friendship and affinity.—There are no grounds for supposing that St. Paul is here speaking of the Jews as a nation, and not of individuals, as though he meant only to say that God had not rejected the Jews as a nation. St. Paul could not have thought of the continued existence of the Jews as the people of God in the old sense, even had he not been aware of Christ's prediction of the approaching subversion of their state, since this would be in direct contradiction to his teaching respecting Christ as the spiritual Messiah and Redeemer, after whose advent the Jews, as a nation, were to expect no other Messiah. And what solace could his loving heart have derived from the belief that God had not, indeed, rejected the nation, but that many of the individuals composing it were doomed to eternal perdition? As little could he be supposed to speak of the more advanced amongst the Jews, which he had before called Israel in a spiritual sense, as distinguished from the great mass of the Jews. (ix. 6, 7.) He is evidently speaking of the whole nation, and the individuals composing it, of all the descendants of Abraham belonging to their community, since amongst them he again distinguishes expressly the true worshippers of God, the elect, and those who are not included in that number. The question,

therefore, is this: What will be the fate of all the members of the Israelitish nation, who do not as yet acknowledge Christ, who have not declared themselves His followers? Are they rejected for ever? God forbid! He who wills that no one shall be lost, and who has the power to execute His will, will lead them to salvation in a manner surpassing all hope. He shows in the first place, that amongst those who have not publicly acknowledged Christ, there are many who are not far from His kingdom; he then elevates his view to the divine plans in the conduct of the world, which, hidden from the human eye, so ordains and disposes all things, that what may appear to us retrogression, debasement and misery, becomes conducive to the benefit of the whole as well as of the individual; and, lastly, he promises salvation in the distant future to all, who are not as yet sufficiently purified to receive it.

In the first place, then, the Apostle points out, that many among those who appear to have rejected the Gospel, are in a condition shortly to receive it with heart and soul. It was impossible to express this in a more impressive manner, than by the example which is furnished by the well-known story of Elijah. When this zealous friend of God imagined the whole nation to have forsaken Him, and believed himself to be His

only remaining worshipper, he was told that God had reserved to Himself seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. How consolatory and instructive is this for all times! Consolatory, since we see that even in times of the greatest defection, the number of God's true worshippers is not so small as many may in their despondency fear; for he adds, "as it was then so is it now also." There have always been men who have not bowed the knee to the idols of their times—and all times have their idols.—And instructive, since it shows us the wide difference between the judgment of God who looks into the heart, and that of even the best disposed of men; while it warns us not to judge by outward appearances or the interest which men display in what we may consider the right form of worship, but to prove, if we can, the intrinsic worth of their hearts, or if we cannot, to leave all judgment to God. "As it was then," says the Apostle, "so is it now also." There is always a remnant of God's true worshippers although they may be hidden from our view, according to the election of grace; for all things are by election, by divine disposal and mercy. If man could work out his salvation by his own strength, divine conduct, predestination, and redemption, would be empty sounds.

7—10. What then? that which Israel sought after, it obtained not, only the elect obtained
 8 it, the rest were hardened; as it is written,
 “God hath given to them a spirit of slumber,
 eyes with which they see not and ears with
 which they hear not, even unto this day.”
 9 And David saith: “Let their table be to
 them for a snare, and for a net, and for a
 10 stumbling-block, and for a retribution. Let
 their eyes be dark that they may not see,
 and ever bow Thou down their back.”

If then, says the Apostle, the fate of man does not depend upon his own exertions, but altogether upon God's conduct and merciful predestination, how can we be surprised that the whole nation attained not that for which it had been vainly striving? or that those only attained it, who had by God been elected as fit at the time, and had their places in the world assigned to them accordingly, while the rest were blinded? The passages quoted from the Old Testament will not appear harsh after what we have observed on ix. 1—18. “God hath given to them the spirit of slumber, eyes with which they see not and ears with which they hear not,” means that as God gives all things, He appears,

8 *κατάνυξις* from *νυστάζειν, νεύειν*, nutare, to nod, especially in sleep; to sleep.

according to human ideas, to have given also that which is evil. But God cannot have *created* evil, His *giving* it, therefore, means no more than that according to His gracious predestination He assigns to the evil already existing, according to His inscrutable plan, a place where it may be least harmful, may even promote the general progress, and itself be changed from evil to good. The words of David would appear intolerably selfish and repulsive, if they were understood as an imprecation upon his personal enemies, for the sake of averting some temporal danger that threatened him. But they are not spoken against his own enemies, except in so far as these are also enemies of God, (*e.g.* Ps. cxxxix, 21, 22, and other places,) and it is evident from their relation to the context that they mean only this: Even the security of the festive board must tend to the destruction of the plans of the ungodly, their cunning machinations will be confounded, their strength will fail them, because they acknowledge not righteousness. It is God alone that executes His plans. Evil itself must serve Him as an unwilling instrument in the execution of His great purposes!

11—16. Now I ask: Have they stumbled in order to fall? God forbid! But through their fall salvation has come to the Gentiles, in

12 order to excite them to emulation. But if
 their fall was the world's gain, and their
 diminution the Gentiles' gain, how much
 13 more their full number! For this I say to
 you, Gentiles: while I am Apostle of the
 14 Gentiles I praise my office, if by any means
 I may excite my kinsmen to emulation and
 15 lead some of them to salvation. For if their
 rejection were the reconciliation of the world,
 what else would their reception be but life
 16 from death? If the first fruits are holy,
 the mass also is holy: and if the root is holy,
 so also are the branches.

12 It appears to me unquestionable, after all that has been said, that *ἥττημα* as well as *ἐλάττωμα* may denote a state of diminution and numerical inferiority; and it is obvious that such a signification gives the best sense here. Who is not reminded of our Lord's parable of the marriage-feast, in which the very circumstance of the lessening of the number of the guests by the staying away of so many of those who were originally invited, was the cause of strangers being admitted to the feast? That St. Paul meant to express the same idea, is shown by the whole context, and especially the 25th verse. I should not translate *ἥττημα* with Dr. Tholuck by "decay," or "moral degradation," which indeed is its meaning in the only other place in the New Testament where it occurs, (1 Cor. vi. 7.) if only for the reason that *ἥττημα* must then be taken as synonymous with *παράπτωμα*, or else as a milder expression of the same idea. In the first case, St. Paul would have said the same thing twice over to no purpose; in the second, we must suppose that he considered the word *παράπτωμα* too strong, and was anxious to soften it, which no one can believe. Moreover, why may we not suppose St. Paul to have used the word, which certainly carries with it the notion of diminution, in relation to quantity, as he does in that passage in its relation to quality, even without adducing authorities?

St. Paul now proceeds to consider the future prospects of such of his kinsmen as are still in the state of obduracy which he has depicted. That he is speaking of all these and not of the true worshippers of God, whom he compares with those seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, is evident, since his question, "Have they stumbled in order to fall, never to rise again?" is not applicable to the latter. It cannot be imagined that God would permit His own worshippers, whom He Himself had elected from the mass of the disobedient, to be lost. But from the whole context and the conclusions at which he arrives in the 32nd verse, for which he here prepares his readers, it is still more evident that he is speaking of the whole people of the Israelites. Has God so conducted all of them,

πλήρωμα has thus its not unfrequent meaning of "the whole."—13 I see no reason for translating *ἐφ' ὅσον* by "since." St. Paul boasts of his Apostleship to the Gentiles, not *because* he is the Apostle of the Gentiles, but because this furnishes him with the opportunity of reacting beneficially on the Jews. *ἐφ' ὅσον* is never found in the New Testament in the sense of *because* or *since*, but in the sense of *during*, in Matt. ix. 15, and 2 Pet. i. 13. *ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον* Rom. vii. 1, and 1 Cor. vii. 39.—*ἀποβολή* total annihilation, spiritual death. It is well known how many extravagant, unsatisfactory, and even absurd constructions have been put upon this verse, because *αὐτῶν* has been always understood with *πρόσληψις* and applied to the Jews. By laying the emphasis on *ἀποβολή* and not on *καταλλαγή*, which seems quite in keeping with the impassioned character of the discourse, and applying *πρόσληψις* to the Gentiles, not only is the difficulty removed, but the best sense of all is elicited, and the one which is most in keeping with the train of thought.

he asks, that they could not but stumble against the stumbling block set up, and that their stumbling should be a fall from which to rise no more? God forbid! Their stumbling, their rejection of the means of salvation, was destined rather to give occasion to other nations to become partakers of the blessings of the Gospel, so that the happiness vouchsafed to them might react upon the Jews and provoke them to emulation. St. Paul expresses this idea in this place with reference only to the object in view, he afterwards adverts to it again with reference to the consequences. This emulation was very likely to become the means of leading to Christianity those who were ripe for it, but whom outward circumstances had prevented from receiving it; and therefore, St. Paul magnifies his Apostolic mission to the Gentiles with respect to this reaction also, (13, 14,) without, however, meaning to confine such effects of his preaching, to the Jews of his own time. If the stumbling and remaining behind of so many in their course was gain to so many others, if the diminishing of the number of those who reached the goal, and the circumstance of their number being so small, was gain to the Gentiles, how much greater will their happiness be when all the Israelites are partakers! God is abundantly rich for all, the Apostle had before said, He is not like an earthly parent who could leave

more to one son only in proportion as he left less to the others. His boundless riches are not diminished by the number of the partakers, nay every partaker becomes richer as the number increases. Indeed, would not the blessedness of beings, who are not only free from envy but full of love in the highest sense of the word, as they must be, who have attained to the highest state of perfection, be necessarily diminished by the thought, that while they are enjoying the most perfect felicity, many are utterly shut out from it? And if the idea which the Apostle so often expresses, that Christ is the Head and His followers the members, is to be considered as anything more than a metaphor, how can the health and happiness of this body be considered perfect until no single member be wanting, and the fulness (*πλήρωμα*) be realised in its highest sense? It was necessary that this sublime conception of Christianity should be communicated to the Gentiles, not only to those who were already members of the Christian community, but to all who should become members of it in time to come, in order to preserve them from the exclusive and narrow-minded idea of the Jews, and from imagining that the fate of the Jews had become indifferent to the great Apostle, who displayed such extraordinary energy for their own conversion. He, therefore, interrupts his discourse

and addresses himself, in the 13th and 14th verses, expressly to the Gentiles; and the word “for” with which he opens his apostrophe to them, shows plainly that he is speaking with reference to what he had just before said. “For this I say to you, Gentiles: while I am Apostle of the Gentiles, I praise my office, if by any means I may excite my kinsmen to emulation and lead some of them to salvation.” St. Paul here expresses himself in the most delicate manner to prevent, on the other hand, the misconception that he had the conversion of the Gentiles at heart only in so far as it might become the means for the conversion and salvation of his own people. Away, then, he exclaims, with the idea so inconsistent with your own happiness as well as my Apostolic dignity, that the Jews who now remain behind that you may be saved, are thereby lost eternally! If your life, your restoration, were accomplished through their everlasting rejection and spiritual death, if they had to die that you might live, what then would your acceptance be but life from the dead? But this is impossible. Spiritual death can never become a means of spiritual life. God, Himself Life, cannot allow the one to die, that the other may live. They have remained behind, but they are not rejected, they still belong to the same consecrated people, whose fathers received

such distinguished proofs of the love of God. They are branches from the same root, sanctified and beloved by Him. He loves them still, and has not cast them out!

17—24. Now if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, a wild olive, wert grafted in, and made a partaker of the root
18 and fatness of the olive-tree; boast not thyself proudly [self-complacently] above the branches: but if thou dost boast thyself [then know that] thou bearest not the root,
19 but the root thee. Thou wilt say then; The branches were broken off, that I might
20 be grafted in! True! on account of unbelief they were broken off, but thou standest on account of faith. Be not presumptuous,
21 but look well before thee: for if God spared not the natural branches he may also not
22 spare thee. Behold now the mercy and the severity of God; towards the fallen severity: towards thee mercy, provided thou abide in that mercy, else thou also mayest be cut off.
23 But they also if they persist not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft
24 them in again. For if thou hast been cut out of the naturally wild olive-tree, and unnaturally grafted into the good olive-tree, how much more shall they who naturally

belong to it be grafted into their own olive-tree!

The Apostle had called the fathers of the Jewish nation a root, and their descendants branches. This leads him to compare the whole nation, which occupied so conspicuous a place in the divine economy, to a grafted, and the Gentiles to a wild olive tree,* more fully developing the important declaration, that the unbelieving Jews are by no means to be considered as lost for ever, and showing from a human point of view the

* The analogy does not appear complete, since it is the tree that is improved by grafting, and not the shoot. Nor are we helped out of the difficulty, by the places quoted by Dr. Tholuck, (*Columella de re rust.*, B. v. 9, and *Palladius de re rust.*, B. xiv. 53 and 54,) which inform us that a withered olive-tree may be revived by inserting a wilding graft into it. For St. Paul does not mean to say that the withered stem of Judaism has been brought to new life by the insertion of the graft of heathenism, since it is the power of Christ alone which has imbued that withered stem with new life. It might, however, perhaps be said: as all stems are not capable of the highest culture, so also all human races were not capable of bearing that most glorious spiritual regeneration, for which the Jewish nation alone had been reserved. It is historical, that this actually took place and, therefore, according to St. Paul's doctrine of divine necessity, it could not take place otherwise than it actually did. The stem, therefore, was already ennobled, at the time of which St. Paul speaks, and did not then require to be ennobled. This also explains the observation that the wild olive tree, (*ἀγρίελαιος*,) although fruitful by nature, yields useful and pleasant fruit only by the insertion of the good graft. In the same manner, all that has developed itself without the influence of Christianity, becomes really applicable to spiritual life, and attains to real value and significance only after it has been penetrated by the vital principle of Christ.

condition of their attaining that blessing, to which, according to their external position, they appeared to have the first claim. In taking this view, he could not speak of their future acceptance as a fact of necessity and without fail to be accomplished; but only as dependent upon their own state of mind and future progress in godliness, since, according to the whole tenour of his teaching, it is impossible that they should become fit for spiritual blessedness, without a complete change of disposition. St. Paul avails himself also of the opportunity which here offers itself, to point out to the former Gentiles, that their own participation is by no means secured by an outward profession of Christianity, but must depend upon the purity and godliness of their heart, upon faith. If some of the branches of the good olive tree, he says, have been broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and in them partakest of the root and fatness of the tree, let not this produce in thee any overbearing presumption, do not ever forget thine original position in respect to them.* They have cer-

* In this place also St. Paul speaks in the second person singular, in order to make his address more general. He is not thinking of one or more former heathens who might stand in particular need of this admonition, but of all who might pride themselves upon their position, quite irrespectively of time and place. Compare page 97.

tainly been broken off, that thou mightest be grafted among them; this is, in fact, a reiteration in other words of the same idea which he had before expressed: through their stumbling, salvation is come unto you—but they have not been broken off never to be grafted in again. This has not been done without cause; not arbitrarily and irrespectively of the whole plan of the All-wise and All-merciful, has His favour been withdrawn from them and transferred to thee. They were broken off, they obtained not salvation, because they were unfit on account of their unbelief. Thou hast attained it, if such be the case, through faith, with which boasting and pride are incompatible. Prove thyself, therefore, and remove them if they still dwell within thee, the outward profession of Christianity will else be as nothing. If the cause of thine acceptance fail, how can the effect be lasting? Why should God have greater forbearance towards the stranger than He had towards His own people, or why should He be partial in thy case? Acknowledge that the plans of God in the conduct of the world have nothing in them that is arbitrary, and that His goodness and His severity are evidences of the same wisdom! They experience His severity without respect to their external position, because they could not be saved by gentle means;

thou now experiencest His goodness, but only so far as thou art fit to benefit by it, otherwise thou also must experience His severity. But they are treated with severity for their own good alone, and as soon as the cause ceases, the effect also will cease. If they who were not to be led to a salutary change of their own disposition by gentle means, are led to it by severity; if they remain not in unbelief, they will be again accepted. How should God, who grafted in the branches of the wild olive tree, be unwilling to graft also the natural branches into the olive tree! No! of a truth they are not rejected!

25—32. For I will not withhold from you, brethren, this mystery, lest ye should consider yourselves wise. Blindness has come upon a part of Israel, until the fulness of
26 the Gentiles shall be come in: and so shall all Israel be saved, as it is written, "From Zion shall the Deliverer come, and turn
27 away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my Covenant with them, when I shall take
28 away their sins." In respect to the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but in respect to the election, they are beloved for
29 the fathers' sakes. For God's gifts and
30 calling He can not repent of. As ye were once unbelieving towards God, but have

now found mercy through their unbelief:
31 so they now are unbelieving that they may
obtain mercy through the mercy shown to
32 you. For God hath concluded all in un-
belief, that He may have mercy upon all.

The Apostle in completing his grand delineation of the course of the divine government of the world, yet throws another beam of light upon it which illumines all remaining obscurity, and renders it impossible for any one who follows the Apostle's arguments with attention, to retain an erroneous impression. One more important truth I will communicate to you, he says, that you may not, relying upon your own judgment, and led astray by pre-conceived opinions, misinterpret my words or the great events which you are witnessing, and in which you are yourselves so deeply concerned. What, then, is this truth which St. Paul proclaims as so necessary for the due understanding of the whole of his teaching? It is the all-important declaration, that God has subjected *all* the fallen spirits to the laws of necessity, that He has so distributed the more advanced and the less advanced, and assigned to each of them the place most conducive to the realisation of His great purposes, and to their mutual furtherance and development, that all without exception may

be led to freedom and true felicity. We must not forget that St. Paul could not place this most important of all truths (which as we have anticipated it in our exposition, cannot now surprise us,) at the head of the investigation which he begins in the ninth chapter, because, agreeably to the requirements and standing-point of his readers, he was obliged to commence with a view of the time present, or of that which then engaged their most lively attention, and in the historical development of which they were so deeply interested, in order to show them that this development was taking place in accordance with the declarations of God, which he interprets in the most spiritual manner. As he traced it through the rigid system of necessity so inexplicable to man, he could only point to the undeniable fact of its existence, and with respect to its inexplicability refer to the positive declaration: "It is impossible that God should be unjust." In the whole course of his exposition, this revelation of the mystery of God's workings is, therefore, the illuminating ray, the acme of the whole development. It is the key which opens to us the visible world, the link which connects it with the invisible world. St. Paul here enunciates this mystery of divine love, to which he had often alluded, in the most positive manner. But recollecting the

requirements of his readers, he enunciates it first in reference to the Jewish nation, from the consideration of whose part in the development of the great scheme he had set out, and then with the most comprehensive sweep, in reference to the whole race. He had before represented the future salvation of those Jews who were as yet in a state of obduracy as a possibility only, depending upon the change of their affections and dispositions; and he might have been understood to mean that their acceptance might possibly never take place, if they now persisted in their obduracy and unbelief. The Apostle had certainly no reason to fear such a misconception on the part of those who had fully understood his previous communications, and who had become assured that even the best and most perfect, without any exception, had at one time been alienated from God, and were indebted for their present advanced condition as well as for their ultimate perfection solely, to the mercy of the Redeeming God, and not to their own merit. They could not doubt that the same immutable love which had conducted them so far, would do as much for those who were still in the state in which they themselves had formerly been. Yet on a question of such moment, so unfathomable to the human understanding, that it cannot in itself be duly understood without a

deep insight into spiritual freedom, the Apostle was desirous of leaving no uncertainty whatever, lest it should entail grief beyond measure for the possible fate of their unhappy brethren, or produce a vain conceit of their own superiority. He, therefore, adds in the most positive terms: Their obduracy will not last for ever, but only for a time, (the divine wisdom and love has un-failing and inexhaustible means for conducting the most obdurate to their salvation, without putting constraint upon their true freedom,) the distribution amongst each other of the more and the less perfected, and the remaining behind of the latter will cease when the object of the divine arrangement is fulfilled; and this distribution furnishes in itself the means for their advancement in due time. And thus* shall all Israel be saved. This is the meaning, St. Paul continues, of that glorious prediction, "from Zion will the Saviour come, and this will be His redemption that he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob." This is the new Covenant, that their sins shall be taken away. And in order not to leave the remotest doubt that he is speaking of *all* the Israelites, he adds: They are as yet enemies to the Gospel, and that too for your advantage, but they are and will remain the people which God has chosen, that the salvation of the

* οὔτεω involves the notion both of time and manner.

world may proceed from them, whose fathers He conducted in so miraculous a manner, and to whom He gave such glorious promises for all their descendants. But God cannot err in His election, neither can He repent of His gifts and promises!

St. Paul had before distinctly said: Not all Israelites are true Israelites, not all the descendants of Abraham are children of the promise. In this place he tells us as distinctly that *all* Israelites belong to the people of election, and extends the promise to *all without exception*. How are these apparent contradictions to be reconciled? Obviously, and in the only satisfactory way, by admitting that St. Paul is speaking of development in the visible world and in reference to time. All are destined for salvation, and all shall be saved. But no one can attain salvation before he is matured, before the godly principle or faith has quickened him, before he has become a true Israelite, a son of Abraham in faith. They only who are now such can now attain salvation; the rest, only when their preparatory course shall be completed, and completed it most assuredly will be through the development of God's immutable counsel, in which all things work in furtherance of the great object, even such as, to us, appear insurmountable hindrances. The true Israelites, the people of election in the

higher sense of the word, from whom the salvation of the world was visibly to proceed and, as the event has confirmed, has in reality proceeded, were indeed only the most distinguished, and exalted of that people. They were called the people of election justly and not from national vanity; because, according to the thoroughly consistent doctrine of St. Paul, all things come to pass according to election, that is, according to the immutable predestination of God. But in accordance with this inscrutable predestination it was necessary that the noble stem should bear many ignoble branches, and so we find a Judas among the immediate disciples of the Lord, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled," that is, because this was necessary according to the plans of the divine wisdom. But this blending together of good and wicked men, while it displayed the latter in all their deformity could not, according to the plans of God, prove any detriment to them. They were, as St. Paul distinctly tells us elsewhere, worse than many of the Gentiles and had to yield precedence to them. St. Paul, therefore, in saying that they still belong to the people to whom God gave His merciful promises, does not intend to flatter their national prejudices, but only to apply to them the universal truth, that all the promises of God will most surely be fulfilled, and that consequently the hour of their salvation will also come.

If then we have rightly understood the thoughts of the Apostle, as simple as they are divinely sublime, it follows that we are not to look upon the words of the 25th verse, “until the fulness (*πλήρωμα*) of the Gentiles be come in,” as a positive prediction that the whole nation of the Israelites will not acknowledge Christianity until all the heathen, without exception, have first accepted it. St. Paul must, beyond all doubt, have meant this word to express a great number of heathens, predestined according to God’s decree. The word itself would leave it undetermined whether he meant all or only a great number, and it may remain so without any prejudice to ourselves, if we are only assured that neither Jews nor Gentiles will ultimately remain excluded. It is certainly not probable that the great mass of the Jews should remain in utter obduracy until the last of the heathens should become a true Christian, if only because a change in the whole disposition of man is never brought about on a sudden impulse, but is dependent upon gradual progress.—In the 12th verse of the chapter the word *πλήρωμα* cannot be taken to mean anything but *the whole*, because the sense of the passage absolutely requires it.

St. Paul tells us, then, distinctly, that every individual member of the nation will in due time partake of all the blessings of the Messiah’s

kingdom. But how was this happy consummation to be attained by the mass of those who in the mean time should die in unbelief? What was to become of his relations and friends, whom St. Paul saw dying in this state, and whose fate he must naturally have had more nearly at heart than the fate of those who should be born thousands of years after him?—If the assertion that “Thus all Israel shall be saved,” is more than an empty sound, and if St. Paul considers this earth as the arena assigned for the purification of the fallen spirits, and their rehabilitation for eternal blessedness, what a weight of probability is added to the conjecture, to which the Apostle’s suggestions have already led us, (Comp. pp. 188 and 277,) that those who have not reached the object of their life, will have to appear again as inhabitants of this earth, perhaps after a very long interval, to repair what has been neglected, to make amends, under God’s conduct, for their evil deeds, since no one is to come out thence till he has “paid the uttermost farthing.” (Matt. v. 26.) St. Paul does not express himself distinctly on this subject, as his purpose did not require it; but he adds: As you were once in unbelief and have attained salvation against your expectation, and not through your own merit, but through the mercy of God, and as this unbelief has become the means of your furtherance, so will

they also who are now in unbelief, through the same mercy of God be saved; and your salvation will, under divine providence, become the means of their furtherance.—And now the Apostle crowns the whole of his sublime discourse with the glorious and pregnant words; “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon them all.” Unbelief is here, in the widest sense of the word, separation from God, as an unavoidable consequence of the disorder engendered by the fall, which would have doomed all fallen spirits to everlasting misery, if the Redeeming God had not interposed. He circumscribed and limited the realm of darkness and disorder, subjected it to the wise laws of necessity, disposed all things according to the wise and loving plans of His immutable will, that darkness might be turned into light, disorder into divine order, misery into blessedness, and that through His mercy all things might be restored to harmony and liberty, truth and goodness.*

Lost in the contemplation of these mysterious workings of God, who thus disposes with equal love, the destinies of so many millions, who, out of the fulness of His riches, dispenses to each at every moment of his existence what is needed

* Several manuscripts have τὰ πάντα in the 32nd verse, instead of τοὺς πάντας which gives an excellent sense if we bear in mind viii. 20, 21.

for his real good, who, notwithstanding the apparently unequal distribution of His mercies, never withholds from one in order to give to others, but who with divine foresight and wisdom appoints to each his place, and regulates the course of his life so as to secure the blessedness of all, which is the great object of His love,—the Apostle now breaks forth in the inspired words:

33—36. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His decrees, how untrace-
 34 able His ways! Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?
 35 Or who hath first given to Him that it
 36 might be repaid to him? For from Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things.
 To Him be glory for ever! Amen.

Unsearchable, indeed, to the human understanding are the plans of divine wisdom, unfathomable to the human eye the ways by which the eternal love of God accomplishes His glorious purposes! However much we may be able in the course of our own lives, or in all that we know of the history of humanity, to trace the mysterious

33 κρίμα, judgment. This word, which is here used in its most pregnant meaning, throws light on all that has been said previously of the judgments and decrees of God.

workings of God, (and alas! how often are the best of us deceived by erroneous impressions!) never are we indebted for any true knowledge to our own researches, never can the most acute human understanding comprehend any decree of God; no mortal was ever His counselor! What we know, what we hope for in faith, we owe alone to the revelation which it has pleased the Almighty to pour into the hearts of those who are fit in purity and humility to hear His voice! No one hath seen God at any time, but He who is one with the Father hath revealed it to us. And what He has vouchsafed to impart in the shape of revelations or in visible gifts, intended for our guidance to heaven, is to be accepted as flowing only from His mercy; for we can have no merit on which to found a claim. We had lost all through our own transgression, and He *gives* us all back; but at the time and in the order appointed by His wisdom and love. Well is it for us that we are creatures of His hand, that our destinies do not lie in our own power, but that divine necessity prevails! All that was created by Him can by Him alone be restored and perfected. To Him, and Him alone, be the glory!

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1—2. I entreat you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God to devote your bodies as a living holy sacrifice, acceptable to² God, as
2 your rational service, and not to conform yourselves to this world, but let yourselves be transformed to the renewing of your mind, so that ye may prove what is the will of God, even that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

The Apostle had completed his sublime picture of the divine government of the world, by showing that mercy is at once the unchanging principle and final cause of the divine proceedings, that all fallen spirits had been subjected to necessity, in order that all might be saved and restored to peace and blessedness. By this mercy of God, this highest conception of which the human mind is capable, he enjoins his brethren to give themselves up, heart and soul, to His compassionate love, and no longer to hinder

2 I follow here the in every way preferable reading, *συσχηματίζεσθαι . . . μεταμορφοῦσθαι*. These infinitives depend on the preceding *παρακαλῶ*.

its blessed effects through the pursuit of selfish purposes in opposition to the will of God and, consequently, to their own happiness and that of the whole community.—Indeed, how can he who is truly initiated into this deep mystery of divine mercy, and penetrated by the firm assurance, that a voluntary defection from the divine and only blissful order, has been the cause of all our misery; that the abandoning the one central point, and the selfish striving of so many to constitute themselves the central point, brought forth discord, chaos, darkness and hell; that the darkened spirits had no light of their own to illuminate the path for their return, and that the bonds which held them could not be broken by the strength of the fettered beings, but only by the strength of the Redeeming God; that He, the Redeeming God, could desire to receive nothing for Himself, but only to give, and required of us nothing but acceptance of His proffered blessings; that, with boundless self-sacrificing love, He brought the fulness of His divine blessedness a willing sacrifice for our redemption; that, by obedience or unremitting adherence to the one and immutable plan of the divine mercy, He restored light and felicity; how can he who is fully impressed in his inmost soul with the truth of this Gospel,

which is the power of God unto salvation, desire to attain salvation by any other means than those appointed by divine mercy? How can he by prosecuting his own plans in opposition to those of God, desire to stand in the way of his own salvation and that of others? How can he have any wish but to yield himself up with all his aspirations and hopes, a sacrifice in return for the sacrifice of Christ? How can he wish to bring only a partial sacrifice retaining a portion of his self-will, when his so doing was originally the cause of the fall and its direful consequences? How can he think by the sacrifice of animals and first fruits to compensate, as it were, the sacrifice which Christ offered in Himself?—No! he will desire to offer himself with all that he has and all that he is, a living sacrifice; he will feel that he has no exclusive existence; he will sacrifice to the all-love of God his very body, and all that distinguishes him from others. A pure and holy life dedicated to godliness is the only sacrifice acceptable to God, and can alone lead to the full enjoyment of the felicity for which we are destined. This, the Apostle adds, is the only service which the purified intellect will admit.—Therefore conform not yourselves to the world, look not to worldly advantages, measure nothing by the

measure of your self-love or imaginary advantage, comfort, or reputation; desire not to shape the course of your own lives; but let it be shaped, as a proof of your resignation, to a perfect renovation by the influence of redeeming love. Then will you learn what is the will of God, and become partakers of what is good, well-pleasing in His sight, and perfect, which is impossible while your will differs from the will of God, while by following your own desires, you remain incapable of accepting what God of His fullness offers you. Then will you have no more uncertainty as to your actions in particular cases; the will of God, the divine law, what is acceptable in the sight of God, will be written within your heart. You will search for the will of God, but you will have another measure than that of your own worldly advantage, convenience, and imaginary wisdom. By the worldly measure, one duty clashes with another, one intention with other intentions, and what is good and perfect cannot be attained. Measure by the principle of self-sacrificing love, which yields itself up for the benefit and happiness of all. There will then be no conflicting duties, there will be but one, which is the furtherance of the kingdom of God; interests will not war with interests, for there will be but one, the beatification of all, and the sacrifice of self-

will. And the proof that you have attained what is good and perfect will be a heavenly peace, and the love of God shed abroad in your hearts.

3—8. For I say unto each of you, by the grace given unto me, that he think not more highly of himself than he ought to think, but as leadeth to modesty, according as God hath imparted to each the measure
4 of faith. For as in one body we have many
5 members, but all members have not the
6 same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and members one of another, but have different gifts according to the grace given unto us, if prophecy [let it be esteemed] according to the proportion of faith; if minis-
7 tration, [in the same way according to the faith shown] in ministration; if teaching [in like manner] in teaching; if exhorting, in
8 exhortation. But he who distributeth, [let him esteem himself according as he doeth it] with simplicity; he who superintendeth, [in like manner] with diligence; he who executeth mercy with cheerfulness.

5—8 *εἴτε προφητεῖαν. κ. τ. λ.* The construction of these sentences is broken and varying. The passage cannot be simply taken as a description of the various gifts according to their effects, on which account the majority of commentators find in it admonitions as to their right application and exercise, supplying the corresponding verbs accordingly. The above way of taking it seems to me the best, because St. Paul is exhibiting

This entire submission to the influences of the divine Spirit to which the Apostle invites us, requires, on the part of man, humility in the estimation of himself, for whoever over-rates himself will thereby diminish the power of the divine influence, or, dissatisfied with the sphere of action assigned to him, will strive to raise himself above others, or to procure for himself selfish advantages. The Apostle connects this advice with the exhortation he had before given by the copula *for*, to show that, without a correct estimation of oneself, this exhortation cannot be complied with. This, however, is widely different from an underrating of the gifts which have been vouchsafed to us, which would render us incapable of using them in a becoming manner; and it would also betoken a want of grateful acknowledgment on our part of what divine redemption has already accomplished for us. It is our duty, on the contrary, to acknowledge with thankfulness the gifts which we have received as bestowed by God, and entrusted to us in conformity with the plans of redeeming love, and for the purposes of salvation; and to estimate their extent and value by the standard of faith,—by

a proper self-estimation according to the measure of faith, as the ground of complete submission, and thus only the comparison between persons endowed with different gifts and the members of the body attains its full significance.

the powers of our mind as they are directed towards Christ, and quickened for the advancement of His kingdom. This is what the Apostle calls "thinking soberly of ourselves," for it not only excludes all self-praise but reminds us also, that all gifts, powers, talents, wealth, and honours are of value, and are to be considered as real blessings and advantages only in so far as we apply them in faith for the furtherance of the kingdom of God. We are to have no other measure for temporal and spiritual gifts but that which is the measure in heaven, namely, a faithful, submissive and loving ministration in the kingdom of God. In so far then, as we value or use otherwise any gifts entrusted to us, they are to us not heavenly but temporal gifts, which must be foregone until changed into heavenly ones. Until then we cannot think of ourselves as we ought to think. St. Paul illustrates this idea by likening the Christian community to the human body, which can enjoy perfect health and strength only so long as every member fulfils to the utmost extent the object for which it was intended. If we imagine a body in which, independently of the life of the whole, every member has an individual conscious existence, as indeed must be the case in a spiritual community—no perfect well-being of the whole body can be thought of, while certain members, exalting

themselves above the others, refuse the service for which they were designed, or desire to separate themselves; or even while any of them consider themselves neglected or mean in comparison with others, and perform their duties with discontent or disgust. The eye, separated from the body, would lose its power of vision; and, even during its connection with the body, would be useless if the foot refused to convey it to the object upon which to exercise its powers; and so with other members. The whole body can enjoy a full, healthy and vigorous existence only while each member, with a perfect knowledge of its own duties, has also the conviction that it is wisely placed, where a cheerful performance of its duties and a voluntary submission to the whole body may secure its own happiness together with that of the whole community. (See 1 Cor. xii.) But in order to appreciate justly ourselves and our relation to others, individually and collectively, we must never forget that we are not indebted for them to our own merit or choice, but to the mercy of God. The Apostle enumerates, by way of illustration, a few of the many endowments and functions of the different members of the spiritual body, but leaves it undetermined, and probably not without good reason, whether he alludes to private or public duties; it appears, at least from the want of

regularity in the enumeration of them, that it was his principal object to show, that no one is to overrate his office to the detriment of the whole body. All appointments and offices are to be estimated as divine gifts in so far only as they are used for the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ in faith, in a spirit turned devoutly towards God, and in self-sacrificing love. Prophecy, insight into divine truth and its interpretation, is really a divine gift and to be valued as such by the possessor in so far only as he is desirous of using it for the purpose of instruction and real advancement of the community, and not for the sordid purpose of furthering his own influence and authority among men; for how could such an ignoble admixture of selfishness be a gift from God, opposed as it is to godliness? What beneficial effects soever the communication of a divine truth may have upon those who accept it in purity of heart, the impure lips from which it proceeds will not thereby be sanctified, any more than the leaf upon which holy truths are written, considered as a material leaf, will thereby become holy. In the same manner, whoever is entrusted with ministry is not to consider the outward office as that which makes it a gift from God; let him consider himself a minister in so far as in his ministry he displays the spirit of faith. So also the teacher and he

that exhorteth. He also who dispenses to others from his worldly stores, let him not over-estimate himself on account of his disposition to give, for that very disposition is a gift from God as well as the ability to give; let him rejoice in such a disposition only in so far as he gives with cheerfulness and in simplicity of heart, in so far as he bestows his gifts in the spirit of love and faith without any corrupt, secondary purpose. So also he who administrates, only in so far as his diligence does not proceed from the desire of outward acknowledgment or similar corrupt intentions; and he who shows mercy, let him not judge himself by his outward deeds, but only in so far as they proceed with cheerfulness from faith and love.

If we thus judge of our inward worth solely by the standard of faith, how will all self-praise be at an end, how much shall we find ourselves in need of divine help continually; and how much shall we, on the other hand, have to praise and glorify our Father in heaven for what we through His mercy possess! How will what has been vouchsafed to us, become an earnest of greater gifts in store for us!

The Apostle now adds a series of short exhortations, of which, from their construction, it remains doubtful whether they are intended as a mirror for self-examination, or as positive in-

junctions. They may be looked upon as either the one or the other, according to the different stages of our progress. It will be worth while to develope this more fully, in order to establish the proper relations between Christian morals and doctrine.

If we were possessed of perfect faith, as we have described it elsewhere, we could be in no doubt as to our duties in any situation in life, because from such faith would spring the intuitive knowledge of what we should do as well as the power necessary for performance just, as fruit springs naturally from a healthy tree. But no one possesses this perfection of faith; and even the most faithful with all due consciousness of his faith, cannot but exclaim, "Lord, increase our faith!" It is, therefore, of immeasurable advantage, that the Gospel exhibits to us the fruits of faith in their fulness, so that even the most perfected may, by comparing them with the fruits of his own faith ascertain what degree of faith he has as yet attained, that he may not think of himself more highly than he ought, and may at all times continue to long for the further help from above which is held out by the Gospel. But not all who belong to the outward community of Christians are to be numbered among the more advanced. Not only at the time of the first planting of Christianity

did many enter its communion who were neither able to understand nor willing to apply its divine essence, who were not buried and raised from the dead with Christ, but this must have been the case even to a much greater extent when Christianity had become the religion of many nations, and when birth alone insured reception within its pale. It is evident that it lay not in the plan of divine Providence, that such only should make outward profession of Christianity, as were fit also to embrace it inwardly or spiritually, but that many should go through the preparatory stages of which St. Paul speaks in the seventh chapter of our Epistle, as outward Christians, just as among the members of the Jewish Theocracy there were many who were not Israelites in the spiritual sense of the word. What St. Paul says of the Jews, (ii. 27—29,) is, therefore, applicable also to the Christian community; he is not a Christian who outwardly professes Christianity, who adheres to the letter, but he only who is penetrated by its spirit. The injunctions given or confirmed by the New Testament are intended for all such as are, in this sense, still under the law. Their non-fulfilment will make them aware of their sinfulness; their fulfilment, on the other hand, will pave the way to a higher degree of excellence; for they cannot consider the words of the Apostle “ye

are no more under the law," as spoken in reference to themselves. But as the regions of law and of grace are not absolutely separated from each other in this life, all rules clearly expressive of the will of God, must be considered as a law binding even upon those who are essentially in the region of grace, and, therefore, released from the spirit of servitude and fear, until they are acknowledged and fulfilled as the natural fruit of faith. For this reason, the preaching of repentance, in its proper sense, finds its place in the Christian economy as well as the proclamation of mercy; and we have still greater reason to magnify the Gospel for expounding to us the will of God in respect to our duties and observances, than St. Paul had to reckon this as an advantage of the Jewish dispensation. (iii. 2; ix. 4.)

But in no way are the rules which are given by St. Paul and the writers of the New Testament generally, to be looked upon as a new law to replace the laws of the Old Testament, through the fulfilment of which man is to merit acceptance with God, or blessedness; and in this sense we are certainly justified in saying, that we are no longer under the law. The declaration, that by the law of works no one can be justified, would apply to the most perfect system of Ethics considered as a law. "If there had been

a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," (Gal. iii. 21,) and we might say, if such a law could have been given by man, nay, by God Himself, there would have been no need for God to send His Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, to accomplish that which is impossible for all law, namely, to destroy sin in the flesh. (viii. 3.) It is, therefore, positively taught by the Gospel, that no moral system can give life, or is possessed of redeeming power; and thus Christian Ethics are not the root but the fruit, the fruit of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God!

This makes it evident, that they who imagine that a perfect moral code is all that we have to look for in Christianity, or who consider Christianity merely as a foundation upon which to construct some perfect moral system, (upon the highest end of which, however, there has ever been a diversity of opinions,) are altogether in error as to the very essence of Christianity, and consequently as to the nature of man. All moral systems hitherto constructed, have only confirmed the declaration of St. Paul, that no law has any quickening power, a declaration which all future systems must of necessity confirm, because it lies in the nature of the subject. Christian morality, as we have seen, arrogates

to itself no such power. No such system, considered as a law or rule, but only the Gospel, is a power of God unto salvation. (i. 16.) It is the Gospel that at once shows us the way, and furnishes the power to walk in it. How, then, should a code of morals of man's devising have the power to accomplish what the divine law cannot accomplish? To recognise the utter emptiness of such a misconception, let us recollect, on the one hand, the natural state of the fallen race, and the diversity in the spiritual condition of the human beings living at any given time, as described by the Bible and confirmed by daily experience; and, on the other hand, let us consider the high and infinite destiny of man. "We have been called unto liberty," and we are to "be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect." This, then, is our destination: to be perfect with freedom. From inward impulse without any external compulsion and without requiring any further guidance at the hands of man, we shall desire and perform nothing but what is godly; (John vi. 45;) subjecting ourselves with freedom as members of the great spiritual body, we shall be unable to have any desire but that of accomplishing in our place what may further the happiness of the whole body, and so of ourselves! What created being, fallen through his own transgression and requiring restoration,

what darkened being requiring light from above would dare to set himself in the place of the Deity, by his own strength to fathom the plans of the Eternal in respect to the final destiny of the whole human race, of which so great a portion is as yet in the lowest condition, and to lay down positive rules for all imaginable cases, and for so many millions differing infinitely in their pursuits and aspirations? And the problem of constructing a perfect system of morals would certainly be no less! But even assuming that the task could be performed, what power is to unite so many clashing interests, or to secure to such a system universal acceptance? An influence from without is not to be thought of, because, in that case, the law would again be only preparatory like the Mosaic law; and, not working from within, it would not be a law of life and freedom. No limited human understanding can fathom the highest or infinite purposes; no demonstrations of the understanding can have power to induce all men, under all circumstances, to sacrifice that to which their passions or their imaginary interests excite them, for the sake of a distant and uncomprehended advantage of a higher order; and even if this were possible, the sacrifice and the choice would evidently proceed from interested motives, inducing them to give up a lesser benefit for the sake of a greater,

and not from love, for which God has destined man.—Or can we expect reason, the highest divine principle in man for the apprehension of the things of God, to accomplish the task? But it was precisely this divine principle in man, that was darkened by the fall and fettered by sin, which has made and still makes us unfit to recognise God and godliness, in so far as we are yet sinful. How, then, could we assume all men to possess in like measure what they all lack, though in different degrees? or how could all make up their deficiencies with that very strength which they are without?

No moral code, then, either of human or heavenly origin has the power of leading to salvation. It could never have any efficacy of its own, but must require confirmation from without, and thus be only preparatory, and still in need of the inward quickening power which is in Christ.

It was impossible, therefore, that Christianity, without contradicting itself, should establish a permanent and complete system of morals, or casuistry, in which man might find for all possible contingencies a positive rule of absolutely perfect action, by which to become pleasing in the sight of God. Christianity is intended to lead man to ultimate perfection, but that which is in its nature unlimited, cannot be confined

within human rules; the higher the state the higher the rule that it requires. But even if a law of the highest order could be devised, it would never be accepted without external credentials, it would require a coercive influence from without, so that it could never lead man to freedom, for which, according to the sublime declaration of the Gospel, he is intended. Had man been intended to be only an instrument of Deity destitute of free will, the fall and sin would be inconceivable, and the whole work of redemption inconceivable also. God would then surely have created man as He intended him to be and to remain.

Therefore, if Christ says: "Do the things which I say," He does not promise that this shall secure our blessedness, but: "so shall ye know that they are of God." It is this increasing consciousness of the godly principle, illuminating the mind through the power of redemption, which changes the human will into the divine, and renders man fit to see God in purity of heart. If we have become conscious of the existence within ourselves of that which is really divine, which restores to us our true nature; and if we feel that without it no happiness is possible, how can we but strive to appropriate it? It is for this reason that Christianity gives its moral precepts in terms which are

capable of higher interpretations as man advances towards godliness and love, which, being infinite, cannot be confined within rules. It is for this reason that the Apostle invites us to prove all things, 'since no apprehension and appropriation with full power of will, that is with freedom, is otherwise possible; and it is only with freedom that the human will can be changed into the divine. But we are to prove, not with the reason blinded by passion or darkened by sin, but with the reason as prepared by obedience to the law and the experiences of life, and thus restored to the full consciousness of the divine principle; we are to prove, as St. Paul expresses it, by the measure of faith. We cannot, therefore, presume with our limited reason, however purified and enlightened, to fathom the deep plans of the infinite intelligence of God, nor to establish a law of works for all spiritual beings and all times; but we shall more and more recognise what is the will of God in every particular case; we shall recognise that in no stage of our existence we are able to do more than our duty, (Luke xvii. 10,) but that in every succeeding stage higher duties await us. And the more we recognise the redeeming power which alone has conducted us so far, the more shall we be desirous to yield ourselves up to its further influences, to offer ourselves as a sacrifice,

and to prove more and more what is the will of God. Limited as our insight must ever be, this proving, this experience which we acquire as we advance in purification of life—as our former faults produce disgust instead of pleasure—will result in our delighting only, as freed from all sinfulness, in the highest divine order, and freely desiring nothing but to be members of that glorious spiritual body, of which Christ is the head.*

9—21. Let love be without dissimulation.

Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that
10 which is good. Be hearty in brotherly love
towards one another; with honour prefer
11 one another. In zeal be unwearied. Be
12 fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.† Be
joyful in hope, patient in affliction, persever-
13 ing in prayer. Minister to the necessities

* It need hardly be observed that this is not intended to discredit or undervalue systematic inquiries into the duties of man. They are to be considered as a useful exercise for all of us, to which we ought to apply ourselves according to our respective standing-points. But no physician can effect a thorough cure without knowing the seat and source of the disease, or without knowing what health is. Hence the insufficiency of all moral systems which are not founded on Christianity. But in order to be Christian, no moral system must relinquish its root or lose sight of its standing-point; it would else degenerate into casuistry or law in the old sense.

† Or, according to another reading, Conform yourselves to the times.

14 of the saints; practise hospitality. Bless
those who persecute you, bless, and curse
15 not! Rejoice with those who rejoice, and
16 weep with those who weep. Be of the same
mind one towards another. Strive not after
high things, but condescend to men of low
17 estate. Consider not yourselves as wise.
Recompense to none evil with evil. Pursue
18 that which is honest before all men. If it
be possible, as much as in you lieth, have
19 peace with all men. Avenge not yourselves,
beloved, but give place (yield) to wrath.
For it is written: "Vengeance is mine, I
20 will repay, saith the Lord." If then, thine
enemy hunger, feed him; if he be thirsty,
give him to drink. For if thou so doest,
thou shalt heap fiery coals upon his head.
21 Let not thyself be overcome by evil, but
overcome evil by good.

These beautiful and heartfelt words of the Apostle are not to be looked upon as a cold and formal catalogue of duties; they are exhortations such as the spirit of love would suggest for the manifold relations and emergencies of life, and, like them, interwoven in a mingled wreath. And yet, although each of them has a significance of its own easily deducible from the preceding, and extending its range as the spirit of love

increases, a close connection is discernible. The Apostle observes first, that that only is to be considered love, which springs from the heart, and is free from all dissimulation. If it is to be like divine love, it must be extended to all men, even to the wicked, as St. Paul has taught us that divine love encompasses all, that God has loved us while we were yet sinners. But as divine love is absolutely incompatible with evil, so also our love must co-exist with an utter abhorrence of all sinfulness. We are to love the sinner while we abhor sin. In our more intimate relations with those with whom we are connected as brethren in spirit and faith, who have more immediate claims upon us, as we have upon them, there must be the spirit of brotherly, filial and parental affection. (*φιλοστοργία*.) As parents, children and brothers, if their relations amongst each other are what they should be, have both the spiritual and worldly advantage of each other at heart, so we also are to be kindly affectioned towards our brethren. And as these family relations should be founded upon mutual esteem, forbearance and affection, so also should all our relations with our brethren. Every business of life requires earnest and unremitting exertion, from which, if exercised in faith and with a fervent spirit, spiritual advantage may also be derived, and thus become a service of the

Lord and a furtherance of His kingdom. Joyfulness, intrepidity and confidence attend the true disciple of Christ, to whom such great hopes and infallible promises have been given;* he is firm, patient and cheerful in tribulation, constant in prayer, ready at all times to ponder his desires, plans and sorrows before God, leaving the issue to Him who turns all things for his good. All help comes from the Lord; but He permits the godly to act, so to speak, as His vicegerents. Avail yourselves of this inestimable privilege, for which present circumstances furnish you more than ordinary opportunities. Be hospitable and benevolent, even to those who persecute and oppress you. As God dispenses sunshine and rain to the evil and the good, so do you show kindness to all; never let your heart harbour an unkind thought. Never confine your benevolence to outward gifts; affectionate sympathy comforts men more than alms-giving. Feel with and for all your fellow-creatures, share their joys and sorrows with kindly feelings, advise with them, sacrifice your wishes to theirs wherever it can be done without detriment to the community, and thus avoid dissension and strife. Aim not at authority and high offices, but fill the places allotted to you, whatever they may be, in humility;

* 2 Cor. xiii. 11 ; Phil. iii. 1 ; iv. 4 ; 1 Thess. v. 16.

for before God all are equal, and the dignity which is pleasing in His sight is, to serve others for the benefit of all, without overrating our own worth. If any one offend against you, let not this induce you to retaliate, but let goodness of heart prevail and become more and more apparent in all the relations of life. Be ready, as much as in you lies, and is consistent with the general good, to live at peace with all men; and in no case let any offence induce you to indulge in vindictive feelings. Vengeance is the desire to punish without the desire to reform the offender; and consequently in direct antagonism with love, and can only work evil. No evil can remain unpunished, according to the divine system of the government of the world, into which we have gained an insight; but God has reserved judgment to Himself, as even the Old Testament teaches us. God can punish only in loving wisdom for the true benefit of all; it is your duty only to bring the offender in all meekness to a just sense of the injury he has done you. Therefore do not withdraw from him your helping hand, when you see him in need of your assistance; feed him when you find him in want, and thus create in him a salutary pain for the injury committed. Whoever takes revenge does not overcome evil, but allows himself to be overcome; and thus evil will triumph

over the injured as it before triumphed over the offender. Through love alone is evil to be overcome.

One great means in the hand of Providence for repressing the violence of evil passions without exciting vengeance, is to be found in the institution of civil governments. This idea, it would seem, leads the Apostle to the following considerations.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1—7. Let every one be subject to the
supreme magistracies. For there is no ma-
gistracy except from God; and the existing
2 [magistracies] are ordained of God. Who-
ever, therefore, resisteth the magistracy,
resisteth God's ordinance; and they who
3 resist shall draw upon themselves punish-
ment. For the magistracies are not terrible
4 to good works but to evil. Wilt thou then
be without fear of the magistracy? Do that
which is right, and thou shalt receive praise
from it; for it is God's servant, for thy
benefit: but if thou doest evil, fear; for
not in vain doth it bear the sword, since it
is God's servant, an avenger to [execute]
punishment upon him that doeth evil.
5 Therefore it is necessary to be subject, not
alone because of punishment, but also for
6 conscience' sake. Therefore also pay tribute,
for they are God's ministers who occupy
7 themselves with this duty. Render unto

every one his due, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

Many differing opinions have existed upon the Apostle's object in giving these exhortations respecting obedience to existing governments. It was natural to suppose that they were written in a great measure, with reference to the peculiar circumstances of the community to whom the Epistle is addressed. It is very probable that this Epistle was written about the year 60, (certainly not later,) which would be the fifth of the reign of Nero, who had up to that time distinguished himself by extraordinary clemency, so that the Jews who had been banished from Rome under Claudius, and the Christians in all probability with them, ventured to return. The picture of a government (verses 3 and 4) from which the malefactor alone has to fear, while the well-disposed derives protection and advantage, might, therefore, be referred to that government. But as the Roman congregation had not been founded by St. Paul, so that

1 ἐξουσίαι ὑπερέχουσai, *potestates eminentes*, elevated magistracies. The adjective is a mere expression of reverence, without any notion of the possession of power at the time being, as though the duty of obedience were based upon that. In the same way ὑπερέχοντες alone is used for magistrates, *e.g.*, Diog. Laert., vi. 2, 11, § 78, and Plutarch Philos. *esse cum princip.*, not far from the beginning.

they were not likely to ask his advice in particular cases, as other congregations might be in the habit of doing, with whom he was more intimately connected; and as they had probably but lately returned to Rome, we have no reason to look, in this Epistle, for special instructions occasioned by particular circumstances. Even the exhortations in the following chapter, although it is not impossible that they may have reference to dissensions which had actually taken place, are of so general a character, and so similar in their subject and tone to the preceding ones, that we see no reason to assume a particular occasion for them. Again, if we consider these exhortations to obedience to the magistrates as directed against the generally mutinous tendency of the Jews, who, in the expectation of an earthly Messiah, that should rid them of the dominion of the Romans, and restore the outward glory of their nation, were ever ready to listen to any agitator who proclaimed himself such—they would be applicable only to Jews, and not to a Christian community who, as is shown by the whole tenour of the Epistle, had acknowledged the Spiritual Messiah, and His kingdom, which is not of this world.

We are, therefore, bound to consider these exhortations to obedience as general and applicable to all rightful governments administering the

laws for the maintenance of order; for St. Paul represents the magistracy of which he is speaking as a minister of God, and wielding the sword for the punishment of evil-doers, and the protection of the well-disposed.* The obligations of Christians towards a usurped or despotic government, which neither protects the just nor punishes the evil-doer, and consequently acts against the laws of God, are not touched upon by the Apostle; and it would be improper, therefore, to apply his injunctions unconditionally to a case which he did not contemplate. There can be no doubt that obligations to a legitimate government must differ widely from obligations to a government thrust upon a nation by force. The former are founded upon affection, mutual engagements and acknowledgment, which would be of little value if they were easily transferable to any one who might possess cunning or power sufficient to supplant a legitimate government. The Apostle, therefore, says generally and without reference

* It is contrary to the whole account which St. Paul here gives of the work of the magistracy, to assume that he is speaking solely, or even especially, of sedition as punishable by them. This is just as untenable as to apply *ἐπαυρος*, with Augustine, to the crown of martyrdom. What idea must we have of the destination for which men are prepared by Christianity, to change: "Act uprightly, so shalt thou expect the praise of the magistracy," into "Act uprightly, and so shalt thou receive from the hands of the magistracy the crown of martyrdom!"

to usurped power, that it is our duty to be subject to the magistracy, because the relation between the head and the members of a state is of God's ordering; and consequently opposition to it would be guilty resistance to the divine order. The existing authorities, he continues, are established by God; and this may mean either that the relation between the governor and the governed generally, or that the government actually existing at the time, is disposed by God; in which latter case, it would apply to the lawful authorities of which St. Paul had been speaking. According to the whole system of the Apostle, which makes all development dependent on the plans of God, and, therefore, even despots also instruments in His hands; (see page 337;) it may certainly be said that hostile powers which subvert governments appointed by God, are also, in a certain sense, of His appointing; but only in the same manner as inundations, pestilence and other destructive calamities, whose progress we are bound to resist with all our might. Governments that have thus acquired power through evil deeds, can certainly never be said to be fearful only to the evil-doer.—It is not without great beauty, in my opinion, that St. Paul, by adopting the second person singular, indicates that what follows in the 3rd and 4th verses is to be taken as a general observation, and

not as addressed to his readers in particular. "Wilt thou then be without fear of the magistracy? Do that which is right and thou shalt receive praise from it." It is only the evil-doer who has to fear the servant of God, not the Christian who endeavours to do what is right from inward conviction, and is not a subject through fear. How could a Christian subject himself to the divine order from fear of punishment? Called to divine liberty, how could he act the part of a slave? or how could the divine order be worthily represented with such a spirit? He will subject himself to the law from the love of order as such, he will not desire to be no more in the state than a member, willingly and with all his energies subservient to the benefit of the whole community, and this from inward conviction, and for conscience' sake. Render then to the state cheerfully, says St. Paul, all that is its due, and look upon those who require such service at your hands, not as enemies but as the ministers of divine order.

It was certainly not the Apostle's immediate intention to remind the Roman authorities of their duties towards their subjects; and yet how beautifully and impressively does he advert to these obligations, in general terms! The powers that be are servants of God, administrators of the divine order, protectors of the good, punishers of

the evil-doer. It is only when fulfilling these conditions that a government is to be considered as appointed by God. And if it be the duty of Christians generally to represent in the visible world, with steadily increasing perfection, the spiritual body of which Christ is the head; it is certainly also the duty of Christian governments, to accept all wholesome advice and co-operation in promoting and maintaining order. Christianity is, therefore, far from requiring adherence to antiquated systems on account of their antiquity; on the contrary, as every individual is to raise himself from the bondage of the law to spiritual freedom, in which, while carrying the divine law within his bosom, he submits himself from conviction and love, so also is the whole body of the state steadily to grow in life and vigour. What the Apostle says, (1 Cor. vii. 21,) "Art thou called, being a servant, care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather," is here also applicable; but it is only by order, wisdom, and love, that the liberty of the individual and of the whole state is to be secured; and it would be in direct opposition to the spirit of Christianity to attempt, even under the greatest oppression, to overcome evil by evil, as this would increase evil, which can in no way be truly overcome but with good. (xii. 21.)

8—10. Owe no man anything, except love to one another; for he who loveth another hath
9 fulfilled the law. For this “Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, (thou shalt not bear false witness,) thou shalt not covet;” and every other commandment, is comprehended in this precept, “Love thy
10 neighbour as thyself.” Love worketh no evil to his neighbour. So then love is the fulness of the law.

These words are immediately connected with the preceding. St. Paul had enumerated several particular obligations; he now generalises the thought: Give to every one what you owe him, but while thus performing the duties which justice demands, forget not that you remain debtors to each other in love. The demands of love, which in its perfection is beyond our reach, can never be satisfied like an outward observance, or a debt. The law of the highest order can be accomplished in love alone; we fulfil it in so far only as we love. All laws that can be laid down in words, are contained and find their highest interpretation in the injunction: “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” As thyself! These are solemn words. Every one desires his own well-being, as far as he is able to

understand it; it is, therefore, part of the love we bear ourselves, that we should unremittingly endeavour to increase in the knowledge of our real well-being, and to prefer whatever may lead to it before all imaginary advantages. So, then, the love of neighbour and children, of husband and wife, of brothers and sisters, will not consist in a weak and unreasonable concession of that which for the moment may appear most desirable and conducive to momentary gratification, but in the due weighing and willing furtherance of what will prove of lasting advantage to the real happiness of those whom we love. We must not, therefore, under any circumstances do from a misjudging affection for our neighbour what we cannot justify to ourselves; nor permit ourselves to do for those whom we love, what we should consider wrong to do for ourselves! And, under circumstances which render the task of ascertaining what is right in our relations to others difficult, let us ever be guided by the golden rule: Do unto others as thou wouldst have them do unto thee in like circumstances. We all wish to be treated with affection by others. Beyond the love which has gained life in us, we cannot go, and the neglecting of any office of love is an evil. Love, then, is the epitome of the law in its fullest significance.

11—14. And this also: considering the time, that it is the hour for us to awake out of sleep:—for now is our salvation nearer than
 12 when we [first] believed; the night is past and the day is at hand,—let us, therefore, put off the works of darkness, and put on
 13 the armour of light. As in the day, let us walk becomingly; not in revelling and drunkenness, not in fornication and wanton-
 14 ness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and take not forethought of the body, to fulfil its lusts.

In general, the Apostle continues in reference to all the preceding exhortations, let us recollect, that we have gone through our noviciate, that we have enjoyed the blessings of our glorious revelations long enough to prove their value, and that we have made some steps towards divine knowledge and salvation. Let us, then, shape our life accordingly; let us no longer sleep; night has passed away, the day of clearer

11 It seems to me unnatural to refer *καὶ τοῦτο* to the *μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε* which precedes in the 18th verse, and to assume that St. Paul wished to enforce the highest obligation to which he exhorts by a subordinate consideration. According to my view, St. Paul was not thinking here of the second coming of Christ. Had he wished to employ this thought as an earnest exhortation to prepare for the worthy reception of the expected Friend, he would have done so in a very different manner.

knowledge has dawned for us.—The Apostle now passes from the representation of those who sleep in the darkness to that of those who work in it, hating the light. Such works, he says, become us no longer. Let us, as bold champions of the truth, prove that we are of the light. Let us walk as becometh the day, and avoid all that loveth darkness and concealment. Let Christ be in all things your Example, in Him let your whole being be swallowed up! Even in the care of your bodies observe due moderation, that you may avoid all incentives to that which is unworthy of yourselves.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—23. Receive with love him that is weak in
the faith, but not so that decisions may arise
2 about thoughts.* One believeth that he
may eat everything, but the weak eateth
3 herbs. Let not him who eateth despise him
who eateth not: for God hath accepted him.
4 Who art thou that judgest the servant of
another? To his master he standeth or
falleth; and he shall stand, for God is able
5 to keep him standing. One man esteemeth
one day above another, another esteemeth
all days alike. Let every one be certain in
6 his own mind. He who observeth days
observeth them unto the Lord. And he
who eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he
7 thanketh God. For none of us liveth unto
8 himself, and none dieth unto himself; if we
live, we live unto the Lord, and if we die,
we die unto the Lord. Whether, therefore,
9 we live or die we are the Lord's. For to

* Or, so that there may not arise any difference on account of opinions, either of parties among themselves or in the conscience of individuals.

this purpose Christ both died and revived, that He might be the Lord of the dead and
10 of the living. But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? Or thou, why dost thou despise thy brother? We shall all stand
11 before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and all tongues
12 shall acknowledge God." Accordingly every one of us shall give an account of himself
13 to God. Let us, then, not judge one another, but rather direct your attention to this, that ye give a brother no occasion of
14 stumbling or offence. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinketh
15 anything unclean, to him it is unclean. But if through meat thy brother be grieved, thou walkest no more according to love. Hurt not by thy meat him for whom Christ
16 died. Let not, then, your good be evil spoken of. For the kingdom of God consisteth not in eating and drinking, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the
18 Holy Ghost. He who in these things serveth Christ, is well pleasing to God and esteemed
19 among men. Let us, therefore, strive after that which tendeth to peace and to mutual
20 furtherance. Destroy not God's work on

account of meat. Everything, indeed, is clean, but it is hurtful to the man who eateth* to (give) offence. It is well neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything at all whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended. Hast thou faith? Have it for thyself before God. Happy is the man who doth not accuse himself in that which
 22 he alloweth. But he who doubteth, and yet
 23 eateth is guilty, because he acteth not from faith: for everything that cometh not of faith, is sin.

It is evident from this part of the Epistle also, that St. Paul knew, or had good reason to suppose, that many members of the Roman congregation had made considerable progress in spiritual knowledge and conversation, and that it is to them chiefly that he addresses his discourse, although we meet also with exhortations to the less perfected. He says, in the beginning of the chapter: "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye," and in the first verse of the following chapter, in continuation of the same subject: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," and further on, in the fourteenth

* Or, so as to *receive* offence; to the offence of his own conscience.

verse: "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge." And since the Apostle knew many members of the congregation personally, as appears from greetings in the concluding chapter, who had probably derived much benefit from their direct intercourse with him, it is reasonable to suppose that he thought of them chiefly, while he was writing.

It is precisely to this circumstance that the Apostle was addressing men who were qualified for initiation into the deeper mysteries of Christianity, and that he was not under the necessity of devoting his chief attention to particular occurrences, that this Epistle is indebted for the grandeur of its plan, and the universality of its special exhortations. Even those which refer to certain prejudices and opinions, were probably not occasioned by particular occurrences, as we have before observed. St. Paul might presume, from the experiences which he had collected in other Christian communities, that similar causes would produce similar effects, that former Jews would continue to consider abstinence from certain kinds of food, and from meat offered to idols, as very important, and that others would deem an ascetic severity indicative of superior piety. I do not think it necessary as many have done, to assume that the Apostle

had either the one or the other of these errors exclusively in view: he may have thought of them both, and for that reason not have named either of them. Admitting that a part of his observations has reference chiefly to the adherence to Jewish observances, the 2nd and 21st verses may yet be considered as applicable to ascetic tendencies, since abstinence from wine, which the Mosaic law did not require, cannot apply to the adherence to the Jewish law. This would explain also, why St. Paul does not so positively and strongly object to Jewish observances in this place as elsewhere, in the Epistle to the Galatians for instance, but confines himself to the declaration of his own opinion in this respect, as matured by his life in Christ. (14.) He is here thinking of a mere possibility, while in the other place he had positive facts to deal with, which had actually exercised a baneful influence.

The cause of both these errors is the same in the human mind, namely, a defective apprehension of the essentials of Christianity, and, therefore, their consequences also are the same; self-sufficiency instead of real piety, spiritual pride, contempt of those who hold different opinions, want of unity and perplexity of conscience. It is to these chiefly that St. Paul directs his exhortations. He enjoins the strong to adminis-

ter with affectionate care to the wants of the weak, which is indeed the only worthy use to make of strength; he enjoins them not to constitute themselves judges of thoughts and opinions, not to occasion schism and unprofitable doubts. We find this exhortation also expressed in general terms, and founded upon the utter incapability of men to judge others, of which the Apostle never ceases to remind us. No man is the lord of any other; we have all of us but One Lord, who will uphold the weak, because His will is that all shall be perfected. (ver. 4.) We are all of us in life and in death the Lord's, who has died for our sake and is living for us. To Him alone, and not to any mortal being, shall we have to render an account of the most secret motives of our actions. (vers. 7 to 12.) Let every one, therefore, be steadfast of purpose, and do, according to the purity of his conscience at the time, what he deems right and pleasing to God. (ver. 6.) The Apostle is far from saying that in following the dictates of our conscience we shall do what is absolutely right; and that we must, therefore, always retain our present convictions, and thus shut out all further improvement. How would this accord with that progress to perfection which St. Paul and Christianity in general hold out to us? Should not he who shows by the tendencies of his heart that he is,

in some respects at least, still under the law, strive earnestly to attain to the full freedom of the children of God. And how could St. Paul express his own opinions on these subjects with so much confidence, if he did not desire that all should by degrees become able to share them with him? But as long as there is any point upon which we have not attained to perfect insight, what can we do but act according to our own insight, or according to the faith that is in us? Does not our very freedom require this? It is only thus that man remains in every moment of his life the servant of the Lord. Were he to act upon the authority of any other man, he would be the servant of that man. But St. Paul says; "Ye are bought with a price, be ye not the servants of men." (1 Cor. vii. 23.) Whoever, therefore, acts according to his own conscience, with the lively desire to do what is pleasing to the Lord, does what is right in his present condition, and no man may presume to condemn or judge him. A glorious and consoling doctrine, without which no inward peace would be secure, as no one can hope to attain perfect knowledge. If thou hast not been able with the talent entrusted to thee to gain ten talents, and if thou canst not, therefore, be set over ten cities, be of good cheer, the one talent that thou hast gained with honest intention

shall be repaid thee. But whoever acts while he remains in doubt, without exerting himself to acquire the insight which in his position he might acquire—without, or against, conviction, is certainly guilty, for he does not listen to the voice of the Lord, does not strive to recognise the will of the Lord, and is, therefore, evidently in a lower condition than one who endeavours to act agreeably to the will of God, according as he understands it. Whatever a man does without, or against, conviction, (for that is, in this instance, faith,) to him it is sin. (ver 23.)

Therefore, even if your opinions in a particular case be perfectly correct, you will not act agreeably to the principles of love, if by your conduct you exasperate the weak, provoke them to uncharitable judgments, or induce them in levity, or without or against conviction, to do after the example of others what they cannot justify to their own conscience; when by a loving forbearance and a wise consideration of circumstances, you might gradually lead them to sounder views. Through want of love, forbearance and circumspection, you will become the cause of guilt in others! The Apostle then adds a most beautiful and touching appeal. Do not, he says, through your want of love, bring evil upon those for whom Christ has evinced the greatest of all love! Do not expose the inval-

able blessing of Christian liberty to misconstruction, by using it to the prejudice of others. "All things," says the Apostle elsewhere, "are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." The kingdom of God consists not in outward freedom, but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Let us earnestly follow all that will conduct ourselves and others to this blessed end. So shall we preserve our inward freedom before God, even when in the spirit of love we make a sacrifice of it outwardly.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

- 1—13.* We who are strong must bear with the
infirmities of the weak, and not live to please
2 ourselves. Let each one of us live to please
his neighbour, for his profit and furtherance.
3 For even Christ lived not to please himself,

* As the doxology (xvi. 25—27) is found in many MSS. at the end of the fourteenth chapter; in others, at the close of the Epistle; and in others, again, in both places; its original position is doubtful. Berthold conjectures, (Introd. vi. § 715,) that it was transferred at a later period from the end of the sixteenth chapter to that of the fourteenth; because, while it was customary to omit the greetings in the public reading of the Epistle, it was nevertheless thought advisable to retain the beautiful conclusion, which could not, however, be placed immediately before the greetings, because there also something similar occurs. (xv. 33.) There would be much probability in this conjecture, were it not that the doxology would then stand in a place where it clearly interrupts the connection. If St. Paul had really placed it at the end of the sixteenth chapter, where it is immediately preceded by a benediction, the similar benediction in the last verse of the fifteenth chapter could furnish no objection to its being transferred thither. See also Rink's conjecture in his *Lucubratio Critica in Acta Apostolorum*, etc. Basle, 1830. p. 135. I prefer Dr. Tholuck's supposition, that St. Paul at first intended to close his Epistle with the fourteenth chapter, but that the beautiful thought, which might serve to enforce what he had been saying from yet another point of view, suggested the addition of a postscript. I have, nevertheless, placed the three verses at the end of the Epistle, so as not to interrupt the connection.

but, as it is written, "The reproaches of them who reproach Thee, are fallen upon me."

4 But that which was written of yore was written for our instruction, in order that through patience and the comfort of the

5 Scriptures we may have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be of like mind towards each other, ac-

6 cording to Jesus Christ: that with one mind and with one mouth ye may praise God and the Father of our Lord Jesus

7 Christ. Therefore receive ye one another lovingly, even as Christ hath received

8 you to the glory of God. For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcision on account of the truth of God, for the confirmation of the promises to the

9 fathers, but the Gentiles praise God on account of His mercy, as it is written, "Therefore will I glorify Thee among the nations, and sing praises unto Thy name."

10 And again it is said, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; laud Him, all ye

12 people." And again, Esaias saith, "There shall be a root of Jesse, and it shall raise itself to rule over the Gentiles; in

13 Him shall the Gentiles hope." Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and

peace in believing, that ye may be rich in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Another important reason for charitable forbearance towards the infirmities of others, is here held out by the Apostle, namely, the example of Christ Himself. We that are strong, he says, ought to have regard to the condition of the weak, that we may by our actions, aid their endeavours after godliness in matters which, considered in reference to ourselves only, might appear indifferent. For Christ did not regard Himself, but had the infirmities of the helpless at heart; He bore with meekness the perverseness of the depraved, even of those who reviled God and godliness, in order that He might aid them. But He bore our infirmities, not by leaving perverseness uncensured to please the wicked, but by approaching their condition with loving forbearance, and gradually training them to improvement. Thus we are not to please our neighbour by ministering to his prejudices, but by lending a helping hand to further him on the path to godliness. St. Paul quotes several passages from the Old Testament which have reference to this example of the

5 κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. According to His pattern.—8 λέγω δέ. This δέ refers to the example of Christ. For He became servant or minister, etc.

forbearance and patience of Christ, as well as the great consolation to be derived from the fact that this patience has proved a real blessing to us in its effects, and that Christ has thereby fulfilled His sublime designs, and will yet further accomplish them through ourselves, if we tread in His steps; he, therefore, calls this patience most expressively the patience and comfort of the Scriptures, by which our hope is to be increased and strengthened. God, who in the whole course of our training and redemption has exhibited Himself as the God of patience and consolation, grant you to be like-minded one towards another, looking up to Christ for an example. (Comp. Heb. xii. 1—3.) God grant that the mind of Christ be in you, so that with one mind and one mouth ye may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Christ received us, and led us to the glory of the Father, so do ye also receive one another. He refused not to submit to the law for the sake of those who were under the law, and thus fulfilled the promise given to the fathers. And while He thus fulfilled the decree of God, He became the Saviour of all nations; fulfilling also the promises of God to them, He became the Hope of all nations. God, the Author of all hope, in whom all hope has its foundations, fill you with all joy and peace, the fruit of hope and faith,

that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14—21. I myself, indeed, have confidence in you, my brethren, that ye are full of kindly intention, filled with all knowledge, and able
15 to admonish one another. Nevertheless I have written unto you boldly, in part, to remind you, because of the grace which is bestowed upon me by God, to be a servant
16 of Jesus Christ among the Gentiles, and to fill the holy office (of the ministry) of the Gospel, that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, being sanctified by the
17 Holy Spirit. I have, then, whereof I may glory in Christ Jesus, in matters relating to
18 God. For I will not presume to mention anything which Christ hath not wrought by me,* in order to the obedience of the Gen-
19 tiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have spread
20 abroad the Gospel of Christ, yet so as that I held myself bound not to proclaim it where the name of Christ was already known, lest I should build on other men's foundations,

* *i. e.* to speak of anything else, (to appropriate anything else to myself,) than what Christ has actually done through me.

21 but as it is written: "They to whom nothing was preached respecting it, shall see it, and they who have heard nothing of it, shall understand.

The Apostle here justifies in the most delicate manner some passages of his Epistle which might possibly induce some of his readers to suppose that he intended to arrogate to himself some authority over the congregation at Rome, as though it had been founded by himself, when it was probably the work of his disciples. I myself, he says, am persuaded that you have goodness of heart, knowledge sufficient to admonish each other, and my exhortations may not have been needed. Nevertheless I have written to you with freedom, to admonish you and to recall to your remembrance some facts which you well know. I felt myself bound to do so as the minister of Christ amongst the Gentiles, and as such, a priest, as it were, of the new Covenant, which knows of no sacrifice but that of man yielding himself up to God. It is this sacrifice which I feel myself bound to consecrate to God and to make pleasing in His sight. I have, then, through the mercy of God, an office in which I may glory. He has, through his power, blessed my exertions in spreading the Gospel in remote parts; far be it, therefore, from me to consider

as my work what Christ has wrought through others. I have at all times considered it my privilege to preach the Gospel where it had not been preached before. I have never wished to build upon the foundation laid by others or to arrogate to myself the honour due to them. (Comp. 2 Cor. x. 13 ff.)

From this it will appear also, what description of knowledge it is which St. Paul attributes to the Romans in the 14th verse, and that he certainly did not mean to imply that they might, through their own exertions, have succeeded in gaining an insight into the glorious mysteries of God's government of the world, which the earlier parts of his Epistle display in so sublime a manner as to entitle them to the name of divine revelations, as much as any which have been vouchsafed unto us.

22—33. On this account* I have been greatly hindered from coming to you. But now that I have no longer any business in these parts, and for many years have cherished
 24 a longing wish to come to you, I hope, on my journey to Spain, to see you and to be sent by you thither after I have been first in part satisfied with your society.
 25 But now I journey to Jerusalem to carry

* On account of this enlarged sphere of action.

26 help to the saints. For Macedonia and
Achaia have been pleased to collect a con-
tribution for the poor amongst the saints at
27 Jerusalem. They have been pleased, and
they were also bound, to do it for them—for
if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual
good, they are bound to assist them in the
28 temporal.—Now, when I have accomplished
this, and secured to them this fruit, I will
29 journey through your city into Spain. I
know, moreover, that when I come to you
I shall come with the full blessing of the
30 Gospel of Christ. But I pray you, brethren,
by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love
of the Spirit, to strive together with me in
31 prayer to God for me, that I may be saved
from the unbelieving in Judæa, and that my
32 designed service for Jerusalem may be ac-
ceptable to the saints, in order that, by
God's will, I may come to you with joy and
33 refresh myself with you. The God of peace
be with you all. Amen.

The circumstances here mentioned, of the completion of the Apostle's business in those parts, of his plan of journeying with a contribution to Jerusalem, and then to Rome, of the danger which he anticipates at Jerusalem—compared with Acts xix. 21. xx. 3 and 22 ff.; 1 Cor. xvi., 2 Cor. viii. and ix.—make it highly probable that this Epistle was written from Corinth in the year 60, towards the middle of the fifth year of Nero's reign. See Hug's *Introd.* ii, § 117, and the chronological table on p. 325. De Wette's *Introd.* § 137, and Tholuck's *Commentary* on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 5.

In conclusion St. Paul most earnestly invites the members of the congregation at Rome to join with him in prayer, that God may avert the perils threatening him at Jerusalem. Not that he was unwilling to bear with cheerfulness the dangers which he might have to encounter by the will of God; for when his friends at Cæsarea endeavoured to persuade him not to go to Jerusalem, he said: I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts xxi. 13.) Neither could he have imagined that the eternal plans of God could be changed by human prayers; for he teaches us in the whole of this Epistle, that no man can in any way alter the decrees of God. But he prays and invites to prayer, because there is nothing more calculated to purify our will and resolutions, to strengthen our courage and resignation, to reconcile our love towards our brethren, than a childlike and faithful consideration of our plans before God. And although the resolves of God are immutable and cannot be changed by acts or prayers, it is this which proves their infinite wisdom and love, that they do not coerce the inward state and freedom of man, as developed at the time, but that (humanly speaking) they take them into account. The plans of God would be different if man, his actions and his prayers were different.

Whoever comprehends this important thought, will feel that he ought to act in every situation of life as if success depended upon his own action, firmly convinced at the same time that all depends solely upon the will of God; that he ought to pray as if his prayer in the name of Christ, brought about blessings or averted evils, with the most lively conviction, at the same time, of the immutability of the plans of God.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1--20. I commend to you Phœbe our sister,
who is a deaconess of the church at Cen-
2 chreæ, that ye may receive her in the Lord,
as befitteth saints, and assist her in every-
thing wherein she hath need of you; for
she also hath been a succourer of many,
3 and of me also. Salute Prisca and Aquila,
4 my fellow-labourers in Jesus Christ: who
for my life risked their own neck: to whom
not I alone owe thanks, but also all the con-
5 gregations of the Gentiles. Salute also the
6 congregation in their house. Salute Epâne-
tus, my beloved, who is the first-fruit of Asia
7 in Christ.* Salute Mary, who hath laboured
8 so much on my behalf. Salute Andronicus
and Junias, my kinsmen† and fellow-prison-
ers, and honourably known to the Apostles,
9 and who were Christians before me. Salute
10 Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Salute
Urbanus, my fellow-labourer in Christ, and

* Who was the first believer in Christ in proconsular Asia.

† Or countrymen.

Stachys, my beloved. Salute Apelles, the approved in Christ. Salute the household
11 of Aristobulus. Salute Herodion, my kinsman. Salute the household of Narcissus,
12 who are in the Lord. Salute Tryphæna and Tryphosa, who have laboured in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who hath much
13 laboured in the Lord. Salute Rufus, elect in the Lord, and his mother and mine.
14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren with them.
15 Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints with
16 them. Salute each other with a holy kiss. All the congregations of Christ salute you.
17 Moreover I beseech you, my brethren, to beware of those who excite division and offences, contrary to the teaching which ye have learned, and keep aloof from them.
18 For such serve not our Lord, but their own belly, and by flattery and fair words, they
19 seduce the hearts of the simple. Your obedience has become well known to all, wherefore I rejoice on your account; but I wish that ye may be wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil.
20 And the God of peace shall tread down Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

St. Paul does not express himself very distinctly in speaking of the promulgators of false doctrines, and originators of discord, against whom he cautions his readers. He says enough, however, to make it probable that he had in mind those chiefly who were endeavouring to uphold the authority of the Jewish ceremonies and observances, and to subject even the converted Gentiles to their observance. But the very circumstance of this caution being couched in indefinite and general terms, makes us suppose that St. Paul is not speaking in reference to any positive information which had reached him from Rome, as to the actual existence of such false teachers, but that he merely surmised that they would find their way there as they had done to other places. While commending the obedience of the congregation, he expresses the desire that they may not be wanting in that wisdom which is necessary for the discrimination and acceptance of what is taught in conformity with the true doctrine, and, therefore, leads to good; and that their simplicity and plainness may secure them against all perverse innovations. If you remain in singleness of mind, he adds, the God of peace will avert discord and schism, or destroy them and their author.

21—27. Timothy, my fellow-labourer, and Luke,

and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. I, Tertius, who have written this Epistle, salute you in the Lord. Gaius saluteth you, my host, and that of the whole church. Erastus saluteth you, the treasurer of the city, and the brother Quartus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. Now unto Him who is able to strengthen you, according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that has been hidden from eternal times, but has now been brought to light, and by the prophetic Scriptures, [and] according to the decree of the eternal God, made known among all nations for the obedience of faith, [To Him] the only wise God be glory, through Jesus Christ for ever!

25 The construction of the three last verses is confused, but the sense is not hard. The mystery is revealed through the manifestation of Jesus Christ. St. Paul cannot, therefore, mean that it is now revealed only through the prophetic writings, though these also, whose sense we can now better understand, have contributed to the revelation. I, therefore, separate *φανερωθέντος δὲ νῦν* from the following words, *διὰ τε γραφῶν προφητικῶν*. Nor can St. Paul mean that the announcement has been made to all nations through the prophetic writings, or even mainly so. —27 *ὃ* is probably used by St. Paul, if it be the right reading, for *αὐτῷ*, just as in Eph. iii. 21, where *αὐτῷ* is used almost superfluously. It certainly creates ambiguity, as *ὃ* might also be referred to *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*.

Although it is a little out of place here, I cannot but call attention to the fact, that the use of *αἰώνιος* in agreement with *χρόνος*,

In this sublime conclusion, the Apostle once more sums up the essence of the Gospel and his own interpretation of it, namely, that all succour and strength come from God alone, through Jesus Christ. This, he says, is the sum and substance of the great mystery of redemption, of the eternal decree of God, of which the prophets have spoken, and which therefore is proclaimed as His one great purpose throughout, (comp. i. 2,) but which now only is disclosed through Jesus Christ and made known to all nations, that the will of God may be fulfilled which is the blessedness of all.

This wisdom, revealed through Jesus Christ, has stood and will stand immovable amid the rise and fall of all human wisdom in its varying forms, because it is the wisdom of the only-wise God. It is for this reason alone that the hostility of human perverseness, and the distortions of human presumption have never been able to

proves incontrovertibly that the writers of the New Testament do not necessarily connect with *αἰώνιος* the metaphysical idea of eternity as opposed to time, but that it must in each case be shown by the context whether it means "eternal" or only "of long duration." An eternal time is a self-contradictory notion, if we take "eternal" in its strongest sense; and no one will wish to maintain, in spite of common sense, that St. Paul means to say of time, that it is eternal, *because* in the next verse he predicates *αἰώνιος* of God, who unquestionably *is* eternal. And can we maintain with any greater reason, that *κόλασις αἰώνιος* (in Matt. xxv. 46) must necessarily denote eternal punishment, *because* *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* is mentioned immediately after, and this *ζωή* unquestionably *is* eternal?

counteract its influence, or weaken the divine power which animates it, and which proves its efficacy upon all who approach it with a fervent desire for light and help.

Oh! that it might be more and more acknowledged, that this heavenly wisdom includes all that man can ever need to walk with confidence and cheerfulness the path which alone leads to his blessed home; and that it is the problem of true wisdom not to find another path, but to remove the obstructions with which human hands have rendered it inaccessible or difficult to so many! Oh! that the divine declaration may be more and more understood and felt, that there is no other salvation, no other name, no other power under heaven given among men, by which we may be saved, but Jesus Christ alone; that before Him every knee may bow, and all tongues acknowledge that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

NOTE.

THE following is an extract from a letter by the author to Dr. Lücke, Professor of Divinity at Göttingen, occasioned by his notice of this Exposition in the "Studien und Kritiken." It is inserted as elucidating and still further developing the author's views on some important matters treated of in this work, and therefore likely, it is hoped, to prove interesting to the

reader. "You speak," he says, "very kindly and favourably of my work in general, and promise me at some future time to communicate certain doubts and objections with regard to particular parts. As I am conscious of having written with no other object than the furtherance of truth, nothing could be more welcome than a promise from a man of such distinguished learning, to lend a helping hand towards the accomplishment of my wishes. But, for the purpose of promoting this common view, I think it necessary (judging from what you have thought proper to premise in your notice) to establish a preliminary understanding between us, as to a main feature of my book—its Christian-philosophic tendency; on which account I beg to submit the following remarks in aid of your critical examination.

"I fancied that I had stated with sufficient clearness in my Introduction, that it was *one* of the chief objects of my work, while considering the human system of the Apostle, *i. e.* the form in which he found it necessary to clothe his teaching, viewed from his own standing point, and with reference to his immediate purpose,—to search also for the absolute truth, divested of the form under which it lies, without which truth the unity and luminous connection, which meet the spiritual reader in all the Apostle's writings, would be altogether inconceivable. I have indicated, p. 54, the manner in which we may discover this, while faithfully adhering to the Apostle's train of thought, and even his very words, in their simplest and most natural meaning; adding, that the proof of our having given no arbitrary interpretation, but of having found truth, according to the measure of our ability, must lie in our thus attaining 'to a view of the world more worthy than any other of the God of Love whom the Gospel has revealed to us, and a wisdom according to the inspired declaration of the Apostle, immeasurably surpassing all human wisdom, a power of God, the hidden wisdom of God.' But as the Apostle was not writing a system, and, consequently, his interpreter, as such, being bound to follow him step by step, can write none, but must confine himself to paving the way for such a system—all that he can do in that way is to make such use of the particular passages most appropriate to the purpose, that the attentive reader may be readily enabled to construct a

whole for himself, by uniting the several parts. Among the number of these passages are the two against which you have deemed it necessary to enter a protest, namely, my explanation of the expression, 'The death of Christ,' v. 1—11, and my deduction from v. 12—14 of the origin of sin in an ante-human existence. They stand in intimate connection with what is said in pp. 215 and 239, on the unavoidableness of sin in the condition of humanity, as also in pp. 177 and 266, on the probability of a return to human life, and many other passages, *e. g.*, p. 286, which are designed mutually to fill up each other's deficiencies, and to form a whole conjointly. It was precisely these passages which induced me to ask, p. 56, that a 'judgment upon particular parts, which might startle the reader, might be deferred until they could be reviewed at the close, and appreciated in their connection with the whole.' That the deeper explanation which I endeavour to establish does not lie in the sphere of idle speculation, but must be of the most blissful consequence to many, my whole book will best furnish proof, as, thank God! it has already done. In particular passages I have expressed myself more distinctly on the points in question, *e. g.* pp. 202 and 277, but there also I have added an observation which may suffice to obviate offence. With regard to the passage on v. 1—11, you say, 'The author understands by the death of Christ, not His bodily death, but the entrance of this purest of all spirits into the visible world, and so, the incarnation of Christ.' I must beg you to read once more p. 184 ff., where I state expressly and repeatedly that I do *not* understand by it the incarnation of Christ but 'the whole of His redeeming agency in and for the material world,' which comprehends the human life of Christ, and in particular His death, as the most prominent and momentous part of it. The whole weight of my reasons rests upon the consideration that the redeeming power of Christ ought not to be limited to any single moment of His earthly life. That the Apostle attributes this agency on behalf of fallen humanity to the Redeemer both *before* His appearance as Man and after His ascension, I have proved, p. 187, by the well known texts. But that he *here* understands by His death, not merely His bodily death, but the whole of His redeeming work, cannot, of

course, be established by reference to forms of speech but only from the spiritual connection of the whole; and I assure you that, after repeated and careful examination of my argument, I cannot find that it is founded on analogies arbitrarily assumed and interpreted. Further, I feel persuaded that you cannot, any more than myself, limit what Christ has done for humanity to His bodily death. With regard to the New Testament usage, besides what I have said in my note, page 185, I need only remind you of what I there observed in the text, and, again, as far back as page 124, in the note on verse 25, on the energetic brevity of expression which employs some important circumstance as a description of the whole. You add further: 'The connection of the passage is clear enough if we take it throughout according to ordinary usage.' Yet the passage so taken, without regard to its spiritual reference, has given occasion to the misinterpretation that it was necessary that Christ should be slain in order to propitiate the wrathful God. It is necessary therefore, that the spirit should come in, in order to free us from the letter of ordinary usage. And, if so, why should we not strive by the spirit to grasp the deepest sense of the spirit? This will then stand in the same relation to the former, itself also containing truth, as the true solar system to the old, which made the earth the centre of the universe. This also contains truth; it teaches the courses of the stars, for practical application in the measurement of time, navigation, etc., correctly enough up to a certain point. But the inward connection and satisfactory unity of the system can only be discerned by him who is able to refer all to the true centre.

"With reference to verses 12—14 I have to observe, in addition to such of my foregoing remarks as apply here also, that I am far from saying or thinking that in this passage, or in the Mosaic account of the Creation and the Fall, the Pre-existence is taught in express words. I only maintain that the Apostle's argument leads us quite naturally to assume it. 'Death,' says St. Paul, 'is a consequence of sin, and *all* men are mortal, not because Adam sinned, but because *all* have sinned.' But even from Adam to Moses, men who received no positive law, by transgressing which they might sin and become mortal, died

notwithstanding, and must, therefore, have been sinners, since such only are mortal. Where, then, could they have transgressed a divine law, for they had none given them in their human existence ? I put it to yourself and every unprejudiced thinker, whether, allowing the premises, any other answer can be given than that which I have drawn from them ; namely, in an ante-human existence ! Indeed, how could they otherwise have been born mortal, when, according to St. Paul, he only is mortal who has sinned ? With regard, then, to my brief observations on the Mosaic narrative, I say expressly, p. 217, that they are merely designed to show that the narrative, spiritually understood, (as, indeed, it must be unless all that is excellent in it is to be degraded to the level of a childish tale,) is perfectly reconcilable with the assumption of a Pre-existence ; and I conclude, p. 226, with the words, ‘Let him who finds these hints in accordance with the spirit of the Apostle, and with the spirit of Christianity, make use of them with us ; and let him who does not, lay them aside without taking offence.’ Taking these cautions, together with my express declaration on pp. 201 and 277, that the Pre-existence, and all the consequences deducible from it, are not by any means indispensable to a worthy and profound conception and practical application of Christianity, but that it is decidedly not at variance with Scripture, p. 200, and so cannot be opposed to any Scriptural creed, I must confess that I do not see the necessity of your protest. Is not a protest of the kind, from the pen of such a man, calculated to arouse the unmerited prejudice against my book, that it is full of idle speculations, and seeks to establish them from the Bible ? Permit me, as I have had no opportunity hitherto of expressing my sentiments on the subject, to state briefly, to what I have been myself led by this doctrine, and to what I would earnestly wish it to lead others also. By its help I have learnt, after a thoughtful search of many years, to understand mysteries both of Scripture and nature, of which I had before but a dim presentiment. It has disclosed to me the connection of the two worlds, the natural and spiritual, which are in fact the work of one God, and to both of which, in our position of humanity, we belong. It has taught me to abandon the one-sided separating tendency

in Theology, Philosophy and Natural Science, and to acknowledge as true such speculation only as, led by the hand of Revelation, combines all in one great unity. It has prepared me for the solution of the vast problem, 'the origin of evil,' in a world created by the only-good God, and the co-existence of Necessity and Freedom in it, and so has preserved me from a Pantheism which, more or less concealed, has gained but too much ascendancy in Theology and Philosophy, but which is directly opposed to the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, as also to the requirements of a purified and self-conscious intellect. It has led me to a view of the world, a firmly grounded and thoroughly Scriptural philosophic knowledge, which need no more fear the theories or demonstrations of any present or future advances in Natural Science. And, since I have found it in manifold ways established and confirmed by Scripture, I could not but allude to the foundation which exists for it in a passage which met me so unsought, and from which it throws so much light on the writings of the Apostle.

"It may be asked, 'Why, then, did not Christ and His Apostles teach the Pre-existence plainly and unmistakably, if it lead to such important consequences?' I could only introduce a few hints towards answering this question, in my book. The condition of humanity, and its high destination to divine perfection and freedom, necessarily requires the independent and actively-exerted development of the divine powers which lie undeveloped in the human spirit. But sensuality and evil would always divert this development from its true course, were it not guided by the training hand of the Redeeming God.

"One important means of this divine training, indeed the greatest and most glorious, is that which we call Revelation, in its narrower sense. Now this could of its deep wisdom give to humanity, from time to time, only what was needed according to its condition, and what it could not otherwise attain; the lode-star, as it were, of the nightly voyage. Openly and expressly, it could only declare what was needed for the time being; more obscurely and only by remote hints, what would have thrown the present into confusion, and diverted it from its more urgent needs. On this account the last and most glorious Revelation.

after which we have no other external Revelation to expect, discloses in plain terms much important matter, of which we find only hints in the earlier Revelations, and also, in embryo, all that will be needed in times to come. On this account, too, Christ promises to His people, that in later times the Spirit shall reveal to them what they have hitherto been unable to comprehend. Not something new and different ! but, ‘He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you.’ Revelation is not designed to anticipate development according to time, any more than to aid idleness of intellect and heart : and, therefore, we have no revelation of Physical and Astronomical Science and the like, or even of such speculative truths as could not be turned into dogmatic formulas, without losing all vital power of progress. All human effort, and especially scientific effort, must, under divine guidance, work together towards redemption from evil and error. It is one important object of sound Science to convince men that, of itself, however proud its triumphs, it can never secure inward peace and blessedness, which must flow from a widely different source ; but its principal object is that, penetrated and enlightened by the spirit of true revelation, it may assist in raising the glorious structure of the temple of God.

“On these accounts, then, I can never allow myself to imagine that the glorious results which I have gained from that fruitful germ, and which have already proved so rich in blessings to myself and many others, are of my own unauthorised introduction. I can allow nothing that I have said to be such, unless it can be shown that it is opposed or derogatory to divine Truth. (Comp. p. 54.) On the other hand, I require no one to see exactly as myself, but expressly contend for universal freedom of spiritual insight. Least of all would I place him, who has need of the same medium as myself, higher than him who attains the same end without it. (Comp. pp. 42—45.) Some of the advantages above enumerated, for which I am indebted to a careful examination and use of the doctrine of Pre-existence, I have stated in my book, from the reasons before mentioned, only as opportunity allowed ; on which account it should be judged as a whole, and tested by continuous and careful reference to Revelation, Science

and Life ; some, however, I could only hint at, while there were many which I found it necessary to pass over entirely, reserving them for another work. (pp. 205, 243.) If, however, I have contributed in my book only some few particulars for investigation, and if I have succeeded in removing certain doctrinal difficulties, *e.g.*, by retaining the strict deductions of an Augustine and a Calvin in the doctrine of Predestination, which is undoubtedly taught in express words by the Apostle, but at the same time resolving what is frightful in it, by yet more strict deductions into the blessed harmony of divine love ; if I have set forth satisfactorily the relation of Christian Morals and Doctrine, etc., I am anxious to commend what I have done to the interest of the scientific theologian, as well as of the educated layman, for which reason also I dedicate my book, p. 55, expressly to all, without distinction of profession, who feel the need of conforming their faith and knowledge, in a word, their whole being, to that unity without which any lasting inward peace is inconceivable.

THE END.



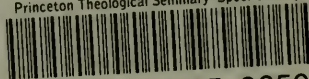
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